WHILE 'TIS MAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A DESPERATE CHARACTER," &c.

PREFACE.

THE Author disclaims any personal connection with the following story, which is purely a work of fiction, not in the least founded on fact: the whole of the characters introduced, including the supposed narrator, are altogether imaginary; the novel is *not* autobiographical.

CHAPTER I.

THOUGH the bluest of blue blood, derived from "a hundred Earls," flowed in his veins, *res angusta domi* compelled him, years ago, to adopt a plebeian calling, much to the horror of his aristocratic father, who in the bitterness of his soul, when first he heard of his son's resolution, exclaimed: "You were surely changed at nurse, Cosmo!" An untenable hypothesis, seeing that from the day of his birth until he had attained the mature age of twelve years, when he was sent to school, he had never been absent from the paternal domicile for more than a few hours together, when taking an airing with his nurse. The truth being, that his plebeian taste for *res* not *angusta* had been inherited, together with many other estimable qualities, from his sainted mother, whose parents had been—why should one be ashamed to write, or he to hear, it?—in the "public" line; and behind the "bar" of whose most respectable establishment the author of his being, then a lieutenant in a marching regiment, without a penny in the world beyond his pay, first beheld the beauteous creature whom he subsequently, finding that by no other means could he achieve her conquest, consented to make his wife.

Prolixity I abominate; but unless I explain how I came to be in the position I occupy at present—for I may as well confess at once that I am writing about myself, and exchange the third person singular for the first—it would be impossible for me to account for my acquaintance with the hero of this mend——I should say, veracious history.

I am not my own hero, gentle reader: far from it. "No man,"

said Talleyrand, or somebody else, "is a hero to his valet;" much ess, then, I say, to himself. I am not my own hero—excuse the repetition of the word—though I may have an idea that I have played that *rôle* in some other person's estimation; but that is neither here nor there.

Unless I introduce some one of my personages first, I cannot begin my story. I do not suppose it is necessary, however, nor would it be of interest to any one to mention the date of my birth; for ladies, contrary to the popular belief, are not alone in their abhorrence of dates (a very good fruit, too, in its proper season). So, whether I first saw the light during the reign of her present Gracious Majesty, or either of her lamented uncles, is nothing to the purpose. The "Medical Register" gives the date of my several diplomas, and the public may draw their own conclusions therefrom; but rack nor thumbscrew shall induce me to say another word upon the subject.

As I have already remarked, I hate prolixity. Most right-minded people do; but the mention of the "Register" reminds me that I may, in confidence, impart to the public, but only under the strictest possible promise of secrecy, that I belong to the medical profession.

No; not a physician, bartering his knowledge and experience for guineas, I regret to say; but an humble general practitioner, parting with the result of his prolonged and careful study of the human frame in health and disease for trumpery half-crowns. From whence it may be concluded that my domicile, surgery inclusive, is not situated in an aristocratic quarter of this great metropolis—for my home is in London, I may admit that much—but at the very antipodes of fashiondom, within easy distance of that favourite resort of the "great unwashed," Victoria Park.

With prolixity I equally abominate talking about myself; but what am I to do? I have admitted that my fees, instead of being guineas, mainly consist of half-crowns, intermingled with florins and occasional shillings—though in general I avoid accepting the latter by themselves if I can at all help it—yet my income, from the above sources, somewhat exceeds a thousand pounds per annum; from whence it may be readily gathered that my practice is no sinecure, but enough to knock up two horses a year; which is exactly the amount of horseflesh I consume between January and December.

I am pretty strong; in fact, I may say that I am blessed with an extraordinary good constitution; nevertheless the increasing wear and tear of my busi—practice, I mean—told upon me to such an extent some time ago that my wife, a most inestimable person, insisted upon my obtaining the service of an assistant—fully quali-

fied, of course. "And who knows," she pursued, clenching her argument, "if he is a nice young man, what may happen?"

What did she mean? She meant a husband for Ethel, our Ethel, my eldest daughter; though the poor dear child was barely thirteen. But mothers are prescient and prevoyant beings; and, I verily believe, keep a look-out for possible husbands for them, when their daughters are babies in long clothes.

Ha! yes; well, a man should never be ashamed of admitting that he takes his wife's advice. I generally do; but then mine is a pattern wife, as I have already hinted; the most sensible, perhaps, person of her sex, within the range of my acquaintance; and when she makes a suggestion, though I may, for form's sake, and to save my credit in her eyes (query, does it?), raise objections, I nearly always—in fact, I may say always—fall into her views; nor have I ever regretted having done so—no, not even in the present instance, notwithstanding all that has passed since that eventful day.

I advertised in the "Lancet" for "A gentleman who——" but I must not use technical terms—a gentleman willing to assist me in the management of my busi——practice, I mean; and, good gracious me! what a motley crew of aspirants to the post replied!

There were English, Scotch, Welsh, Irish, French (at least one Frenchman), and German (two). Some were old enough to be my father, others young enough to be my sons; some were gentlemen, and others not; some I found out to be incredibly ignorant of the duties they were expected to perform; while others displayed an amount of knowledge of the same that bewildered me. One poor fellow had travelled from a remote corner of the United Kingdom on the strength of my advertisement, turning up several days after I had been suited, and was dreadfully disappointed when he found that the situation was no longer vacant—a young lady, he said, having promised to marry him if he succeeded in obtaining the appointment. I had some difficulty in getting rid of him, but finally managed to get him out of the house by taking down his name and address and promising to write to him, in case the young gentleman I had engaged turned out unsatisfactory, of which contingency, by the way, I had not the remotest fear.

Yes, I was suited, then; which brings me to the commencement of my story.

As I was dismissing my bricklayer—I mean, this would-be assistant, whom at first I had mistaken for a layer of bricks who was one of my club-patients—my attention was drawn to a young man who was sitting on a bench, called the club-bench, in the passage, which in my house does duty for an entrance-hall.

There was something about the young fellow that struck me

at once; and, after scolding the page for not showing him into the waiting-room, I invited the stranger into the surgery, uncertain whether he was a patient or yet another aspirant.

Shall I describe him?

Perhaps I had better do so, for the reader will have doubtless already guessed who he was.

I have said that I was struck by the young man's appearance, and that is true; very much struck, indeed, for there was an indescribable something about him that immediately commanded attention. It was quite evident he was nc common man.

While seated he looked an average height, but when he stood up, on my addressing him, I perceived that he was short, so short as barely to reach to my shoulder, and I am not by any means tall.

I fear I cannot do him justice, but will try.

He was well-dressed, quietly but well, and his admirably cut clothes sat easily on as perfectly symmetrical a figure as I had ever seen.

A compact, well-proportioned head, covered with thick, curly, brown hair, surmounted a full, firm neck, which, in turn, crowned shoulders broad to the utmost extent compatible with his height; his waist was shapely, hips not too wide, his limbs exquisitely proportioned, and his hands and feet simply perfect. In a word, he thoroughly deserved the name, afterwards bestowed on him by my cousin, of "Apollo Belvidere in miniature."

His face?

Let me see: a high white forehead; thick, perfectly arched eyebrows of the same colour as his hair; grey eyes, rather deeply set perhaps, but piercing in their liquid brightness; the longest lashes I have ever seen; straight nose; wide, but not too open, nostrils; mouth, a trifle large, perhaps, but disclosing, when he smiled, which was not seldom, two rows of teeth like ivory.

I have been reminded that the tusk of the elephant is sometimes rather yellow; but my young visitor's teeth were white as snow, or, rather, as cream-laid note paper of the finest make, and regular as—as—as clockwork, for want of a better simile.

I forgot where I was; hem! yes; beautiful teeth, white and regular; mouth a trifle large, but chin round and dimpled; a small, blonde moustache just defined his upper lip, and imparted a degree of manliness to a face that otherwise would have been altogether feminine in its symnetrical beauty—of beard or whisker he had not a trace; his cheeks were as round and delicately tinted as a girl's; the general shape of his face was oval, and his ears were small, and laid close to his head.

An imperfect sketch, I am aware; but sufficient, I trust, to

give my lady readers some tangible idea of the hero of this history. Connoisseurs in masculine beauty, of whom I have no pretensions to be one, have found fault with this or that feature; one was either not in strict proportion with the rest, or lacked force or sweetness; but on the whole, they were bound to admit that any alteration would have marred the full effect of one of Nature's master-pieces, and have converted an unusually attractive countenance into a common-place visage. So nearly do extremes approach each other; as it was, the youth was, indeed, as my cousin remarked, "A man to make every woman love, and every fop detest him."

"How very unfortunate!" I exclaimed, *sotto voce*, when I found that the young fellow had called in answer to my advertisement; "how very unfortunate that I should have engaged that other man! I did not like him a-bit, but thought he would suit, and had not seen another; how very provoking!"

"I am afraid you are rather young," I remarked, scanning the youth's face and form with well-pleased eye, for he was—*eheu!*—pleasant to look on, as, I hope, I have made the reader to understand.

"I am twenty-two," he replied, gravely, as if one score years and two was quite a patriarchal age—I had mentally guessed him to be eighteen.

He had passed all his examinations, and was duly licensed to practice by the "College" and the "Hall."

He was a gentleman; his quiet, self-possessed manner and address were sufficient guarantees of that; and I felt a degree of hesitation that was quite unusual to me, when broaching the subject of his salary. The question, in point of fact, almost stuck in my throat; but I managed to get it out, or at least I was trying to shape my query into the least offensive form it was capable of assuming when, crimsoning to the tips of his ears, the young fellow anticipated me, and said: "My wages, you were going to observe?"

I could not help smiling. "Salary—not wages; yes?"

"Fifty pounds a year, I believe is the usual sum,"—the crimson tint deepening to carmine.

"Very well," I assented; although the man I had engaged had asked less, and my bricklayer would have come to me for thirty.

"It is customary," I continued, "to furnish a reference."

"I have none," replied the young fellow, frankly, and with unfaltering gaze, though I scrutinised him pretty closely as he spoke.

"No reference," I repeated, with affected indecision of manner,

though I had quite made up my mind to engage him, even were I obliged to pay the other man his twelve months' salary: "hem."

The youth shook his head: "I know no one in London. The professor at the hospital and some of the students know me by sight, and to speak to casually, but that is all; my landlady, if you like to ask her, can tell you about my habits while I have been in her house."

The address was somewhere in Bloomsbury, and the woman's name, though familiar, quite unknown to me.

"Very well," I answered, "I shall write to her; I have no doubt she will give you a good character. When could you come?"

"To-morrow—to-day, if you like."

"Suppose we say the day after to-morrow," I replied.

He nodded acquiescently. The thought had occurred to me that my wife might be able to suggest some method of breaking off my rash engagement with the other man, whom neither of us liked; and, moreover, I wished her to see this young fellow before I took any further steps in the matter.

"See," I went on, after taking down the lodging-house keeper's name and address, "perhaps we had better say this day week, at the same hour; in the meantime I shall make inquiries, and I have no doubt we shall come to a satisfactory arrangement."

"Very well," replied the youth, "as you please; this day week; good morning."

"Stop a minute; you know, I presume, what your duties will be?"

"Make myself generally useful?" he returned, with a half-smile, that caused a dimple in either cheek, while a slight flush again suffused his face and neck.

I nodded. "You can dispense; put up bottles; and so on?"

The flush faded away completely, leaving the young fellow's face, not "deadly" pale, but white as the cheek of a lady who has lately risen from a bed of pain.

It was clear that my visitor was of a sensitive nature; had probably been delicately brought up, and had already experienced a reverse of fortune.

"Poor young fellow! you shall not be very sorely tried here," I mentally determined; and I knew that I could answer for my wife and children to treat the stranger kindly, and make him feel himself at home among us. As for the patients—well, they could not behave worse to him than they often did to me; it used to annoy me at first to find that my care and attention, not to speak of skill, had remained unappreciated; or my best intentions misrepresented, or misunderstood—he would get used to it, in time, as I had done. Sick people must not be judged by too severe a standard, for ill-

health is a bad master of the ceremonies, and the convalescent often make amends for the rudeness and ingratitude of the patient.

"I have had lessons in dispensing," replied the youth; "I have been shown how to paper a bottle of medicine! and I understand book-keeping and prescribing."

"That will do," I said, "nicely. I shall expect you this day week."

I was on the point of offering him my hand, but the youth inclined his head so gravely, not to say haughtily, that I changed my mind; and, opening the door, bowed him out with as much ceremony as if he had been one of my carriage patients,—*raræ aves* in the neighbourhood of Victoria Park.

CHAPTER II.

My assistant, as I must call him, though as yet by anticipation, had not left me many minutes, when my wife and children returned from their morning walk.

"Well, papa," exclaimed my eldest; "any more aspirants?"

"One," I replied, quite forgetting my bricklayer for the moment.

"What is he like?" cried all the children in chorus.

"Does he wear gloves?" queried Ethel, glancing admiringly at her own hands, which were encased in the daintiest of primrose kids.

"How old is he?" asked my wife.

"Whom shall I answer first among the 'upturned faces of the roses?'" I inquired, reminded of poor Raven Poe's line by the sea of rosy, dimpled cheeks uplifted round me.

"Me! Me! Me!" and "Me!"

"Mamma first, I should say," I returned. "He says he is twenty-two, my dear, but does not look more than eighteen. He is a good-looking, gentlemanly little fellow, and had as nice a pair of gloves as you, Ethel"—for the hand-coverings of most of the aspirants had been a subject of much mirth in our family circle.

Ethel clapped her hands.

"How unfortunate you should have engaged that Mr. Potts!" said my wife.

"Yes," I replied; "I am sorry for it, and rely upon your tact to get me out of the scrape, my dear."

My wife shook her head. "I see no help for it," she returned. "You might give him a month's notice if you did not like him; that is, if this gentleman would wait."

I shook my head in turn, and said, "I have told him to call again this day week, and he has gone away with the impression that I shall engage him then."

"Well, write to Mr. Potts, and tell him plainly that you hav

seen another person that will suit you better; offer him some remuneration for his disappointment, and I do not see that he can have any objection to such an arrangement."

"It does not seem the correct thing to do," I replied, "and yet I do not want the fellow to come; I know I never shall be comfortable with him; whereas——"

I paused, and my wife took up the parable and said, "By the bye, have you heard from the person Mr. Potts referred you to?"

"No, my dear, I have not; there is scarcely time; but I told him to consider himself engaged. I felt so jaded when he called, I was really glad of the prospect of securing anyone that seemed at all up to the mark."

"I do hope the referee will not reply to your note, my dear; or if he does that it will not be satisfactory; and if so, there is no difficulty about the matter. You said this gentleman was to call again in a week?"

I nodded.

"Write to him, and tell him to come to-morrow; and if you think he will really suit you, close with him at once."

"I think you will like him, my dear," I remarked, meditatively.

"If he suits you," she replied with a smile, for she approves of being deferred to, dear little woman, "if he suits you, my dear, he will suit me; you will have more to say to him than I shal.."

"Will he let me ride on his back, pap-pa?" queried my ; ungest talking cherub, Alfred, not quite three years old.

"Of course not, Alfie," primly asserted his eldest sister.

"Martin does," promptly exclaimed the little one.

"Martin is only a page," explained Gertude, my second daughter, "and this gentleman is—is——"

"An aspirant," I interposed, smiling, seeing her at a loss for a word; whereupon they all laughed, and my wife clapping her hands, exclaimed: "Come, come, children; up-stairs; off with your things, and let us get to lessons; Miss Montgomery will be here directly."

"The arrival of a patient expedited the departure of my flock; for the foregoing remarks had been interchanged in the hall—I mean, the passage; and retiring into my surgery, while the little ones scuttled upstairs to prepare for their daily governess, I was directly engaged in a deeply interesting conversation with the new arrival, one of my "club" patients.

"How are you to-day, Smith?" I inquired, smiling blandly, as I motion the patient to a seat.

"Worse and worse," replied the man grimly; scowling at me as if I was the bitterest foe he had in the world.

"How is that? Have you taken your medicine?" I further inquire, with an appearance of great interest, and a design of casting oil on the troubled waters of the club-man's temper—for the "club" is a large one, and the fellow a "most noble, grand bell-puller" in it. "Have you taken your medicine?"

"I have not"—decidedly, and in a deeply-injured tone of voice.

"Why not?"

"Because it searched me so."

"But if it searched you, you must, at least, have taken some of it."

"I took one dose; but it done me no good;" shaking his head and groaning dismally.

"You should have gone on with it."

"Me? no fear! It went in at my shoulders, and came out at the calves of my two legs, with such a searching all over, I thought I should a died."

"Oh, nonsense, man!"—rather warmly; "give me your bottle, and I'll make you up something else. Show me your tongue. Ha!" &c.; &c.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear!" I exclaim, mentally, as I retire behind my high counter to compound the fellow's physic; "I wish I had some one to relieve me of this drudgery."

"Dr. Deever."

It was the club-man, Smith, who spoke.

"Yes," I reply, answering to a name which is not mine, but by which I am more frequently addressed by my aristocratic patients than by my own; "what is it?"

"Don't you go give me no peppermint, for I can't a-bear it; nor yet no salts; them's what you guv me last time," shaking his head knowingly.

"Ha! ha!" I laugh, rather spasmodically; "you know too much, Mr. Smith."

"I believe you, doctor," returned the fellow with a grin, relaxing for the first time since he came in, "too much for you, may be; he! he! he! but I ain't a-going to be killed, nor poisoned neither, by no one; not if I know it,"—another chuckle, a wink, and, I fancy, a tongue thrust into one cheek, in appreciation of his own wit; but I have hastily retired behind my screen, and am not quite sure of the latter indignity.

Truly, a medical man, especially a club-doctor, at four shillings per annum, members to find their own bottles, should have the temper of an angel and the patience of Job; whereas I have neither, but, on the contrary, am blessed with seven children who must, precious darlings! be clothed, fed, and educated out of my earnings ah! dear me!

"Here you are, Mr. Smith," I exclaim presently, as pleasantly as I can, on emerging from behind my screen, bottle in hand, "Here is some medicine for you, without either peppermint or salts; and I have no doubt, if you take it regularly, that it will do you a great deal of good."

"All right. doctor," replied the club-man, in a more good-humoured tone of voice than he has yet spoken in, his little joke on the last page having restored his ruffled temper. "You musn't mind *me*—I'm nowt but a roughish sort of chap, I ain't."

Whereupon, in token of reconciliation, he extends a grimy paw for me to shake; but pretending not to see it, I hastily bid him "Good morning," and retire behind my counter. The fellow is a chimney-sweep, and has, certainly, forgotten to wash his hands then, fearing he may be offended, I continue from my coign of vantage, "Good morning, Smith, good morning; look up again in a day or two, if you are not better." Then, to the page, "Martin," in a loud voice, to be heard in the passage, "show the gentleman out."

N.B.—We are all "ladies" and "gentlemen" in the neighbourhood of Victoria Park.

Exit Smith, and therewith enter Mrs. Jones, much excited, with a child clasped tighly across her breast. They would, both mother and young one, look all the better, be all the healthier, and certainly smell all the sweeter, for the use of a little soap and water, which I feel strongly tempted to recommend, but refrain for fear of offending my visitor, who is a "Female Druid," (why not Druidess?) and a person of much importance in her "Lodge;" so I inquire, blandly, instead, "What can I do for you this morning, Mrs. Jones?" and, as I put the question, feel like the proprietor of a greengrocery, who sells coal by the pound. "What can I do for you this morning, Mrs. Jones?"

The "good lady," who hails from the sister isle, and, at the present moment exhales a powerful odour of London gin, instead of replying, bursts into a flood of tears, and hugs the bundle of unsavoury rags she carries in her arms, so close to her dishevelled bosom, as to elicit therefrom—the bundle, not the bosom—a series of the most appalling shrieks.

"Dear me! dear me!" I exclaim, as soon as I can make myself heard above the din, "what is the matter, Mrs. Jones? do try and compose yourself, my good woman, and tell me what it is you want. Is there anything wrong with the child?"

"Wrong! is it?" she answers, "sure, doctor dear, it's killed and murdered ontirely, so it is, the darlint! och! save me child! save me child! an' the hevvens be yer bed: ahmin!"

"Amen," I reply, smiling in spite of myself, for by this time

I have managed to catch sight of the urchin's grimy countenance, and reading no great indication there of serious accident or illness, continue: "Sit down, sit down, Mrs. Jones; and let me look at the little fellow. Why, Tommy, what is it, my little man? where are you hurt, eh?"

"It's the kittle, doctor dear; sure it's the kittle that's biled over, and scalded him alive, ochone! the darlint! the darlint!"

Here she sways herself to and fro, sobbing, as if her heart would break, from the combined effects of excitement, maternal affection, and gin. "Ochone! ochone! oh, doctor dear, an' won't ye save him?"

"To be sure, Mrs. Jones, to be sure," I answer, reassuringly; "let me see where he is hurt. Take some of these wraps off him, I can't see through all these things."

I am beginning to feel impatient, as the reader will perceive—"Come, come; take off these things."

"Oh, doctor dear, I dursn't; sure it's killed an' murdered entirely he is, be that bla'guard kittle."

"So you said before—there now!"

By this time I have succeeded in divesting "Tommy" of the mass of shawl, rug, and filthy blanket that envelopes him, and find him quite uninjured.

"There is not a scratch on him, Mrs. Jones," I exclaim, triumphantly, rising from my knee, on which I had been resting during the operation—"not a scratch!"

"The good Lord be praised!" exclaims the woman in accents of profound relief; "sure I didn't stop to look, but picked him up at wonst, an' throwed the first thing I could lay hould on round him, an' run here; sure I knew you was the gentleman would cure him for me, if there was any breath lift in him, at all, at all."

"You're very kind," I reply, "Mrs. Jones"—getting rather impatient; "but you can see for yourself that the boy is not hurt—he has had a narrow escape certainly; but he is not injured in the least."

"Ah! thin, many thanks to you, doctor, an' may the blissins——"

"There, there, Mrs. Jones; good morning—" I really cannot stand it any longer, but rush behind my counter, and leave the woman to find her way out with her burden by herself, which she presently does, muttering as she goes no end of queer blessings on my head. Well, her intentions are doubtless good, and I fear I am somewhat ungrateful.

Exit Mrs. Jones, at last, leaving unsavoury reminders of her presence behind her; and enter a boy, unknown, the victim of a street accident, and covered with blood, which is pouring from a wound over his left eyebrow.

Follows another scene, which I shall not harrow the feelings of the reader by describing, or attempting to describe, but which is no unfrequent occurrence in my practice, and is, moreover, usually unproductive of pecuniary results, but not of trouble, and oftentimes anxiety.

Exeunt boy and numerous friends; many hundreds more having formed a cordon round the front of the house, and enter another, then another, and yet another unsavoury customer, to the number of more than half a score; who, one by one, depart without leaving much silver on the doctor's counter, but plenty of mud on the surgery floor. At last eleven o'clock arrives, and Charles closes the front-door, for the brougham is waiting to take me round to see my patients. Heigho! I am already tired, and my day's work has scarcely yet begun.

"It will be a great relief," I say to myself, "when I have an assistant; I wonder I never thought of getting one before. I do wish he was here—patience: to-morrow—"

I am off on my rounds after a kiss, as my daily custom is, from each of "the upturned faces of the roses."

CHAPTER III.

It would be as uninteresting to my readers as distasteful to myself, to recount in full my experience of that day's round of visits—and when I say that day, *ab uno disce omnes*—one day with me is as like another as—as two peas in a basin of mutton-broth. Nevertheless, is it not a fact, verified by every-day experience, that the major incidents of a lifetime are often strangely crowded together, following, as it were, upon one another's heels in the most unaccountable manner, and hopelessly confusing all one's most elaborate calculations?—at least, I have frequently found it so, in the case of others, as well as in my own.

As a matter of course, I expect every morning to receive at least six new calls, and sometimes twice that number of messages are scrawled, in a charming variety of handwritings, on my slate; but on that particular morning, the 2nd of March, 187—, I found I had only one. But one new call! astonishing! With the four-and-thirty visits I already had to pay, one more would make but thirty-five, which was unprecedented in my experience, at least since the first year of my residence in Essex Place.

"Doubtless," I said to myself, "I am premature in thinking of engaging an assistant; there will be positively nothing on earth for him to do." But who is ever satisfied? Probably if there had been six or eight messages, instead of one, I should have grumbled and said there were too many.

"Where is this to?" I then inquired, slate in hand, of the page, whose handwriting was somewhat hieroglyphical.

"Rhymer's Rents—a parish case?" I had promised to see a few for an absent friend who held a parochial appointment. "No; who was the messenger? a poor-looking girl, eh?" Then to myself: "Must wait till I have seen Mrs. Smith, and Miss Brown, and Master Robinson, and Mr. Green, and the Rev. Mr. Jones's baby,"—no relation to the female Druid, by the way—"and half a dozen more. Nothing very particular, I dare say—must wait, at all events."

I dine—tell it not in Gath, that is to say, west of Temple Bar—at two o'clock; partly on account of the children, for whom my wife thinks, and I agree with her, that a late dinner is unadvisable, and I like to see them all gathered round me; and partly because I have become used to that plebeian hour; and, though I will not admit that I am in the least dyspeptic, I confess that any departure from his usual routine is apt to disagree with me.

Yes, I usually dine at two o'clock; after all, what do I care whether it be known in Gath or not; or, for that matter, in Askelon. We have not the remotest wish or power to force any one to follow our example; and as for changing our habits at anybody's dictation—well, it is not likely.

Dining at two o'clock also pleasantly interrupts the business of the day. I have to go out at eleven, and pay visits until two; by which time I have become hungry, and very often sadly impatient of the oft, too oft, repeated story of old men's, and of old women's ailments, and young children's woes; and the dinner hour—I am off again at three—forms an agreeable diversion, and enables me to return to my duty, if not with pleasure, at least with a certain amount of resignation.

I believe it is an established axiom as old as the days of Horace—

"O fortunati mercatores," &c.,

and probably far older, that no person ever was satisfied with his or her occupation, and doubtless never will be; for my own part, I cannot undertake to say more than that I am resigned to mine, which is, I think, admitting a great deal.

On the particular day to which I am alluding, remarkable in my calendar for the very unusual circumstance of my having received a solitary message, and that brought by a poor-looking girl, to visit some one in Rhymer's Rents, an exceedingly impecunious locality in the neighbourhood, I returned home to dinner at my usual hour, having already seen the more influential of my patients, and found that a second message had been de-

livered from the same place: "The lady was very ill; and would the doctor come directly?"

As I have already mentioned, we are all "ladies" and "gentlemen" at the East End, and I did not expect to find any exception to the rule in the foul alley I was required to visit; but I was mistaken.

In this modern Babylon of ours there are acres upon acres of ground covered over with just such buildings as Rhymer's Rents—that is to say, small, closely-packed, tumble-down tenements fit only for the habitation of bats and owls, but thronged with human beings, terribly poor for the most part, and too often criminal and unhealthy—but what, let me ask, can be expected in the way of morality and hygiene where twenty people, old and young, are congregated together in a space that would be sadly overcrowded with a quarter of that number of inhabitants.

Who the person was who gave the Rents their name, I never heard, nor have I taken any pains to ascertain; at the time of which I write they belonged to a man named Brown—I beg his pardon, Browne—a very rich person, who once wrote me a note beginning: "Mr. Browne presents his complements" (*sic*) and, gradually ascending, from the third person to the first, ended, "I remain yours truly."

To return to Rhymer's Rents—in a very poor neighbourhood, at no great distance from my house, are two wretched short streets running parallel with each other, and called, respectively, Neptune, and Trident Row. Poor and miserable as the houses are in both these *cul-de-sac*, they are, nevertheless, highly pretentious dwellings compared with the miserable two-roomed tenements with pent-house roofs, built, on the fraudulently abstrated gardens of the "Rows," by Mr. Rhymer, or some one else, who thought poor people had no business to cultivate a taste for flowers—those

"Stars that in earth's firmament do shine."

Two-roomed "houses" with one ten-foot-square apartment up, and another down, stairs—"houses" without any back outlet of any description, door or window—"houses" where the inmates are compelled to deposit their refuse in the twelve foot wide "street" that separates them from their opposite neighbours, are a disgrace to "The Great City" wherein they exist, and a foul blot on her boasted civilisation; let us hope that a time may speedily arrive when they will be swept away.

Reached the entrance to the Rents, which was guarded by three posts, about five feet in height, and three feet apart, the doctor had some difficulty in making his way between the heaps of indescribable refuse and the crowds of grimy children that covered

the pathway—I cannot call it a street—and made locomotion both dangerous and painful. In all my Metropolitan, or rather East-endian, experience, I had never before been called upon to visit this place, and then found that it was almost impossible to discover in which of the houses my patient lived; for most of them were without numbers on the doors, and those which could boast of a brass "seven" or "five," which the owner doubtless regarded with the same feelings with which some of us look on a valuable heirloom, had been so distinguished without any regard to numerical sequence. Thus "No. 40" was next door to "No. 2," "No. 6" to "No. 18," and so on. Nor, on inquiring of some slatternly women, with each a baby in her arms, who were standing in the roadway discussing the affairs of the neighbourhood, could I obtain any information concerning the house, "No. 17," of which I was in search.

"Do you know, Sal?" Thus, one of the slatternly women to another, who was presumably, an old inhabitant of the Rents.

"No," Sal was sure she couldn't tell; her own number was "sixteen;" whereupon I suggested that it might be next door.

"No, that's number three."

"On the other side?" I inquired.

"That's twenty."

I could, it seemed, do nothing more than go from house to house until I succeeded in discovering where my patient lived; and was on the point of proceeding on my quest, when a little girl, or rather a precocious little old woman, about nine, indescribably dirty and preter-naturally sharp, looked up at me and said: "If you're the doctor, the sick lady lives in the last house but one on the right-hand side; but her grand-daughter's out, and there's no one in but herself, and she can't come down to let you in, for she's ill a-bed, she is."

"What am I to do?"

"The door-key," replied the little girl, who understood the query as addressed to herself, "is in the winder; and all you've got to do is to lift that up and let yourself in."

"But," I ventured to suggest, "there may be more than one sick lady in the street."

"No," asserted the child, confidently, "it's all right, I know—it's her as sent for you; we has the parish doctor, we has," this rather boastingly, as if "we," the inhabiters of the Rents, had a good deal to be thankful for, or perhaps proud of, in "our" joint proprietorship in that excellent individual, and my esteemed *confrère*.

The house of which I was in search had, I found, no number

on it whatever; but the little old woman, grateful for the coppers I had bestowed upon her, followed me to the door, and, deftly lifting up the window, took the key from off a flower-pot containing a withered geranium, and let him in, with the reiterated assurance that I should find the lady upstairs.

It was a wretched place, "No. 17;" all the more miserable, perhaps, that some attempt at decoration had been made by the inmates. Thus the grate was filled with paper shavings; and an old, very old faded red-cloth cover was laid on the rickety round table that occupied the centre of the room; two or three chairs, all more or less dilapidated, were covered with faded chintz, as was also a decrepit sofa, that stood, or tried to stand, opposite the door, on three legs of unequal length; four poor prints, in poorer frames, were hung up against the walls, and a broken glass vase on the chimney-piece was filled with paper-flowers, bearing no resemblance to anything earthly, and sadly begrimed with dust and smoke. With this exception, however, the general aspect of the place was neat and clean, plainly indicating that the inmates were superior to the ordinary run of people who inhabited this miserable lane.

In the left-hand corner of the room, encroaching somewhat on the fire-place, were the stairs that led to the upper apartment; very shakey and dilapidated they were, and requiring much tact on the part of the ascender to escape a fall, or the forcible contact of his head with the upper steps, for they twisted round and round like a cork-screw, and were, moreover, dark and narrow.

Having left my hat in the room below, I managed to reach the top without meeting with any accident, which was rather fortunate, seeing that the stairs were, as I have said, both narrow and dark. I had some difficulty, however, in finding the handle of the bedroom door, for there was no landing-place; but after several attempts at length succeeded in making my way into the room, which was of the same size as that downstairs, but much lower, in consequence of the ceiling sloping down to within three feet of the floor, from the back to the front of the house.

The apartment itself was very bare and comfortless; it was without a fire-place, and the paperless walls were rough and uneven, while through the chinks in the carpetless floor one could see into the room beneath; the bed and a large box made up the whole of the furniture; the former was hung with curtains, once pink, but now mostly grey, which concealed the patient from the doctor's view, until, standing beside the bed, I drew them aside, and beheld a pitiable spectacle. An old, old woman, seemingly of very small size—in fact, apparently a dwarf, and wrinkled almost beyond belief, but certainly rouged, and dressed out in an old lace cap decked with faded flowers, from beneath which a number of crisp

auburn curls, palpably false, clustered round an almost incredibly furrowed brow.

So motionless was the form that I could not determine whether she was insensible, asleep, or dead, and touched her gently on the shoulder; whereupon she started, and opening her eyes, looked up at me without evincing the slightest symptom of surprise; she then attempted to sit up, and I perceived she was partially paralysed. She tried to speak, but owing to her imperfect articulation, I utterly failed to comprehend what she was saying; a piece of stupidity on my part that seemed to greatly irritate the old lady, who shrieked at me, and shook her wrinkled and bony fist in impotent rage.

After vainly trying for several minutes to make out what the poor old woman was trying to say, I came to the conclusion that my presence was doing her more harm than good, and was on the point of making my escape, when I heard the window downstairs open and then the door; presently a pleasant flute-like voice exclaimed in evident surprise, if not alarm: "A man's hat!" and then: "Oh! the doctor's, of course," in more re-assured accents; light footsteps were directly after audible on the stairs; and the owner of the flute-like voice came gently into the room. "Jessie, Jessie," then exclaimed the old lady with wonderful energy, and on turning round, I beheld one of the prettiest girls I had ever seen.

"Jessie!" surely such loveliness was not native to Rhymer's Rents.

A BEAU-IDEAL.

LIKE rose-leaves scattered on fresh drawn milk
Is the tint her soft cheeks bear;
Like floating gossamer threads of silk
Is her long, loose hair.

Like the mellow'd tinge of a hare-bell's blue,
Is that of her thoughtful eye,
Now changed to a violet bathed with dew,
Or a summer sky.

Like the lingering sounds of an echo borne
Through the woods when their hearts rejoice;
Like the lull of the night, the ring of the dawn,
Are the tones of her voice.

In twilight caves where the mermaids dwell
'Mid halls of coral and beauties rare,
Hangs many a tender-tinted shell
Like her rosy ear.

Fresh as the breath of the morning air
Is that of her laughing mouth;
Yet warm as the perfume meadows bear
In the balmy south.

Light as shadows that lightly fall
When night doth the morning greet—
Light as the drop of a leaflet small
Is the tread of her feet.

Like that by the touch of sin ne'er marred:
But with maidenly beauties warm,
And fraught with the grace of a supple pard
Is her virgin form.

Blest in soul as in body bright,
And cradled in virtue's arms,
She was changed from a beam of heavenly light
To a model of charms.

CECIL MAXWELL-LYTE.

TALES FROM THE DRAMATISTS.

By ALFRED HENRY BROMILOW.

No. VII.

"THE GAMESTER."

A MAGNIFICENT dramatic effort, this! It may lack the beauty of blank verse, but the construction, the nervous language, and the moral of the play, are sufficient to strike one blind to nearly every defect. Edward More was the author of it; it is his best drama, indeed the only one that has handed his name down to posterity. Garrick, Young, Kemble, and, in our own day, Sullivan, have bestowed all their genius on the character of "Beverley;" Miss Siddons and Miss O'Neil have forcibly depicted the heroine; whilst John Palmer was so superior in "Stukeley" that, it is said, the character died with him.

THEY were sitting together in an apartment of rather faded grandeur, Charlotte and Mrs. Beverley, two sisters. It was early in the morning, and their eyes were red with weeping. Beverley's passion for gaming had estranged him from the paths of virtue; he had squandered his own and his wife's fortune, though the latter doubted not his affection. Step by step had the ruin been brought about, though, up to the morning of our making the acquaintance of Mrs. Beverley, her husband had never before absented himself from home all night.

The servants had had to be dismissed, and the family relics, fondly and fearlessly caressed, to be disposed of. But of the attachment of even servants, whose affections for a family seldom last beyond the fortune of it, Mrs. Beverley had cause for gratitude; for here was Jarvis, a worn-out old man, who was come to console them in their distress, and place his little treasure, the hard earnings of a long life, at the disposal of his hapless mistress But Mrs. Beverley could not think of accepting the money, though she thanked the old servant for the proferred aid.

Where her husband was at that moment, or where he had been all night, only one, a certain Stukely, who professed himself a friend, could say; and propitiously he entered the apartment. From his remarks it was probable that Beverley was at a gaming hell; and the old man, Jarvis, with the wish to be of service to the one whom he had served from a boy, determined to go and seek him. As he left, there came a loud knocking at the door, and upon Charlotte going to see who was there, she beheld Jarvis going off with an angry creditor, whose wrath he had somewhat appeased. This performance, however, was highly distasteful to Stukeley. In order to further the plots he had laid, he proceeded

to throw out certain well-concealed hints to Mrs. Beverley, concerning what he called "Rumour," and which were somewhat discreditable to the lady's virtue. But so well worded and ambiguous were these hints that Mrs. Beverley, though annoyed, failed to see their drift.

Charlotte had ever been distrustful of this Stukeley, who, ostensibly to relieve a friend in distress, had fanned Beverley's consuming passion by lending him money to gamble with. She therefore, felt relieved when Lewson, who was in love with her, came upon the scene, and this person, without much ceremony, as he was honest, proceeded to challenge Stukeley's conduct. The other replied that, at another time and place, he would be glad to hear Lewson's allegations; and, saying this, he departed.

Lewson, like Jarvis, was a true friend; he had come upon the family business, and it was necessary for Mrs. Beverley to accompany him to a sale.

When Stukeley reached his lodging, he was mortified at what had taken place. Had *he* been allowed to pay the creditor at Mrs. Beverley's, he would have had another hold on the lady. Beverley was his tool; but no more wasted time; more work had to be done; the jewels of Beverley's wife had to come into his hands, and they might prove instruments powerful enough for his purpose. Bates and Dawson were provided with false dice, and poor Beverley, before whose eyes passion had weaved a mist, would never suspect the treachery, would be more deeply ruined; the reversion of his uncle's estate would then doubtless be sold to Stukeley, and so also Mrs. Beverley's jewels—at least, so hoped the amiable Stukeley.

At the place indicated by Stukeley old Jarvis found the unfortunate Beverley. Aye, he was in that place of all others where reason leaves the honest mind, and a strange, wild infatuation hurries its victim to an irrevocable doom. It was a gaming hell. Bitter, ah, bitter beyond the computation, or the imagination of those who have never experienced the awful feelings of the ruining passion, were the reflections that haunted the feverish brain of the gamester. He listened to the offers of help old Jarvis made; but Stukeley, generous Stukeley, was at hand, and Jarvis returned to his mistress. So, so; Beverley had not only ruined himself and the home where peace and happiness once smiled, but also his friend! Stukeley's money was done, and the lenders wanted security before advancing more. That security Beverley could not produce, he had now nothing of value, no estates, no hopes. But, suggested Stukeley, since they were both undone, there was no time for pity, all must be action. Had Beverley or his wife no trinkets, no baubles locked up that might retrieve their lost posi-

tions. Beverley replied that his wife had jewels, but he would never ask for those. At that rate, continued the viper, there was nothing for Beverley but red ruin, and for him a prison.

A prison! Had Stukeley, then, risked so much in the cause of friendship! Of what use now were jewels; Stukeley should have them; before night the gamester would place them in his possession.

When Beverley arrived home, Charlotte requested the return of her fortune, which she had given him to take care of, but her brother evaded the demand. Had he, then, wasted her money too? Was it not enough for him to ruin his wife, his children, his prospects, but must also show his sister the highway to poverty and disgrace? What troop of friends had prompted him to so base an act; and, not content with this, must be ever in the company of a deceiver, whom Lewson knew too well, and of whose infamy he should presently have ample proof? Thus spoke sister Charlotte.

Mrs. Beverley was of another nature. Fond and loving to the last, she caressed Beverley, and assured him that his presence was all she desired. Let him leave Stukeley, and, even in ruin, were he near her, she should be happy. But would she then allow him to desert a friend who, solely to relieve him, had reduced himself so much as to have no home now but a prison? No, no; her love for her husband, her desire for his peace, precluded her from not granting any of his requests! Her jewels were but trifles; he should have them; he should use them as he liked; and he, he vowed that never more after this one chance to regain his position, would he gamble; he would give up his evil habits, and as she knew well he had a heart that, when it beat its true music, was ever faithful to her, he would, after this one night, for ever be with her; her happiness should be his study, and the love-light of her eyes his elysium.

In the meantime, Stukeley, at his lodgings, was busy instructing his associate Bates how to proceed. When the money for the jewels had been lost, Stukeley would advise Beverley to sell the reversion of his uncle's estate, and to Bates would he send him for that purpose.

Charlotte upbraided Mrs. Beverley for the weakness she had shown in parting with her trinkets. Mrs. Beverley replied that she was ready to do anything that would rescue her husband from the pit into which he had fallen. Charlotte was, however, inclined to think that Beverley was unworthy of all this mercy, particularly as he had not scrupled to appropriate her fortune. This announcement startled the unhappy wife, who, had Lewson not entered at that moment, would have made some reply. The visitor was come to tell a secret to his Charlotte, but, before doing so, he

had one question to ask her. It was now over a twelvemonth since they plighted their troth, and he wished to know if she had changed towards him during that period? Yes, she had changed; but she added, that it was in his favour. She must promise him to be his on the morrow; and then for the secret. She hesitated —would he not allow her a little longer? No, he had reasons for his request. The promise was made; and the secret? Lewson knew for a certainty that Beverley had squandered Charlotte's fortune in its entirety!

Lost! lost! lost! every penny that had been obtained on the jewels was sunken! In the gaming hell were Beverley and Stukeley—ruined, and again penniless! Rage, anger, and disappointment! A fierce altercation arose between the two gamesters. Beverley seized his friend by the throat, and commanded him, ere he committed a double murder, to invent some plan for their redemption. There was, said Stukeley, no plan, no hope; there was nothing in the world but ingratitude, the seizing of a friend by the throat because, forsooth! that friend had been fool enough to advance money, in order to relieve a gentleman in distress!

But, urged Beverley, would that friend not forgive the ingratitude, and propound some scheme for their mutual advantage? Well, then, there was the reversion of the estate of Beverley's uncle. Bates, perhaps, might buy that. Enough, Beverley went to see.

"Ah, ah!" chuckled Stukeley, "fortune favours me. But, though his pocket is ruined, my passion for his wife is unsatisfied. I will go to her."

To Mrs. Beverley the seducer went, and found her alone. The world, said he, had strange rumours of gamesters and mistresses. Of a fond wife at home, who gave jewels to save her husband: and of a "lord and master," who carried those valuables to an exorbitant mistress. And this same husband had forged a signature to a note he had shown his wife, wherein a supposed ruined friend spoke of a prison as his last home.

Was this Beverley's case? Stukeley was too deep not to answer in the affirmative.

The insinuations were too vile, the conduct too heartless, not to arouse in Mrs. Beverley's breast a desire for vengeance, which, with an oath, she vowed to reap.

This was the time, suggested Stukeley, for her to reap it: let her fly from the deceptions of a poverty-stricken husband to the embraces of a loving and rich one. Let her make use of her youth and her beauty, while yet they were fresh and fair, and bestow her charms on the speaker.

It was an awful request, and an awful moment. Stretching

herself up to her full height, the fierce lightning from her eyes darting on the viper, and she cried forth

"What! has poverty so humbled me that I must sell my soul for bread! Villain! despicable villain! *friend!* I know thee. My injured husband shall thank thee. He shall know thy baseness. Your absence, sir, will please me. Yet, as I fear the consequences of thy villany, keep thy secret and begone."

He went straight to his lodgings, where he met Bates. Presently knocking was heard, Stukeley directed Bates to descend, and Lewson entered. Stukeley demanded the cause of this interruption. Cause! Were not the ruin of an honest man, and the proposal of dishonour to his wife, sufficient cause? If he had any courage now, with the drawn sword, was the time to show it. No, he would not; he knew his game better; he parleyed, and argued, railed, and scoffed. Lewson, seeing that remonstrance would be in vain, left him.

To Bates' question as to what occasioned so great a noise, Stukeley replied that there were matters of vast importance to be accomplished. Lewson must be put out of the way. He knew sadly too much. Would Bates perform the deed and secure the reward? Ah! he liked not the hazard; but the prize was well worth the risk. That night it should be done.

That night, as Beverley was going home, he met Lewson, and, in frenzy, challenged him to fight, on account of his having said something about the loss of Charlotte's fortune, and that, too, in the hearing of Bates and Jarvis. Lewson declined the encounter, went on his way; whilst Bates followed, and left Jarvis to conduct his master home.

To save himself from all suspicion, Stukeley, though it was late, called Dawson to his room, and gave him a warrant to seize Beverley's person for debt. So that in the event of Lewson's death, the affair would read thus:

Jarvis and Bates had heard Beverley and Lewson quarrelling, Stukeley, knowing of Beverley's intention to accost Lewson for a supposed offence, had issued a warrant of arrest for debt against Beverley, so that the intending fighter would be lodged in jail, and his plan of bloodshed frustrated. The world will look upon the arrest as an act of mercy.

The deed was performed. Lewson, according to Bates and Dawson, was no more. Beverley had been removed to a debtor's prison. He was attended by the old and faithful Jarvis, who had already announced to Mrs. Beverley and Charlotte the death of his master's uncle, coupled with the joyful news that now Beverley was a rich man.

To the prison, therefore, the ladies repaired; but too late,—

unknown to any one, Beverley, in his despair, had taken poison. Their arrival, and the news they brought him, cheered him not; he asked for a chair, and grew fainter. The fortune of which they spoke he had already sold. Here Stukeley entered, and tendered Beverley's release; remarking that he had ordered his arrest only to prevent bloodshed, but his effort in that line had, it appeared, been useless.

Blood, blood! who was dead? Lewson, Charlotte's intended husband? Charlotte screamed aloud. The proof was too plain; Jarvis and Bates had heard Beverley, on the preceding night, in angry quarrel with his victim.

Dawson and Bates were here; but, amazement, Lewson too. Aye, he was alive; and to clearly inculpate Stukeley had, by the direction of Bates and his confederate, kept out of the way. They would have remained villains had their master stopped short of murder, but that they could not brook. They would tell all.

But Beverley, poor Beverley! What of him? The poison was rankling in his vitals, his strength was ebbing fast, and his brain was confused. The convulsions grew stronger, the limbs stiffened, foam gathered round his lips, and his life was over.

Let frail minds take warning, and, from example learn, that want of prudence is want of virtue.

PERSONALITIES OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

XXVI.

LORD ELCHO.

In our last sketch of this series which appeared in the December number of THE NEW MONTHLY, we made, so to speak, our bow to the public, and intimated that the series had closed. Since that time, however, we have been given to understand from an authoritative quarter that a continuance of the sketches would be far from unwelcome to several readers of this Magazine; and, therefore, in place of summarily dismissing the "Personalities" of our interesting legislature, in company with the departing Old Year, we gladly take the opportunity of opening the door to a fresh batch of familiar faces with the advent of the New.

Lord Elcho is probably more familiar to the general public from his conspicuous connection with the Volunteer Movement than from his parliamentary personality. When that organisation was first set on foot, in consequence of a general impression some years ago that we were on the brink of a French invasion, Lord Elcho threw himself heart and soul into the movement, and remains to this day one of its most ardent and devoted supporters. Since the rapid expansion of the movement and the universal love of rifle-practice developed amongst the volunteers, which ultimately led to the celebration of a kind of great annual shooting carnival on Wimbledon Common, Lord Elcho's cottage at that bullet-whizzing rendezvous has become a standard institution, and the genial hospitality of its owner a household word. Moreover, his lordship was the popular Colonel of the "London Scottish,"—a post, indeed, which, with much regret, he only resigned about a month ago. But Lord Elcho is more than a colonel of volunteers and a patroniser of rifle meetings. He has sat for a number of years in the House of Commons, and, what is more, he is a distinct, and, in certain respects, a distinguished personality of that assembly. In politics he describes himself as a Liberal-Conservative; but, judging from his speeches, votes, and the general tenour of his public conduct, the proportion would seem to be about three-parts of the latter element to one of the former. He sits, along with Mr. Roebuck, Sir Robert Peel, and others, as an independent member, and consequently the Liberal Whip is thrown into some degree of perplexity with regard to the direction

which his lordship's vote may take on this question or that There is one remark, at any rate, which should be made respecting that vote,—it never has been, and assuredly never will be, prostituted to the infamous purposes of faction. The political circumstances of the last two years have been crucial to many a politician. Patriotism has been put on its trial; it has been sifted like wheat. The question has been sternly brought home to the breast of this man and of that by the inexorable voice of circumstances, "Is it party or country which is the more dear to you? In the face of national peril will you show yourself to be nothing better than the degraded and unwholesome spawn of a grovelling faction?" Staunch partisans as well as independent irregulars have been put in the furnace seven times heated; and how many among the number have come forth as gold? To the credit of the national name, more, we are rejoiced to believe, than perhaps were expected. And amongst the noble army of patriots must assuredly be reckoned the member for Haddingtonshire. Throughout the late crises his voice and his vote have been unfailingly at the service of the Government. He never allied himself to that brood of political serpents who are for ever crawling on their bellies. Along with many another distinguished legislator, he preferred, irrespective of party, to stand on his legs like a man; and doubtless the sentiment of his heart was that of our immortal patriot-poet:

> "This England never did, nor never shall
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> *But when it first did help to wound itself.*"

And now that Bulgarian Agitation has changed its name to Afghan Committee, it may be taken for granted that his lordship will use an early opportunity of aiding, from his place in Parliament, to denounce that presumptuous though imbecile movement. The causes of Lord Elcho's popularity, and of his being a recognised power in the House of Commons, are pretty evident. He has proved that his independence is not merely nominal but real, and that it is for the most part guided by a calm and reflective judgment. His speeches always indicate a considerable amount of carefully-gathered information, and that his matter has been thoroughly digested before being offered to his audience. Then, too, he is one of the really *good* speakers in the House; that is to say, he expresses with grace and fluency opinions which are always pregnant; he rises occasionally into a kind of elegant oratory; and, above all things, he knows when to stop. In addition to these qualities he is in happy possession of a handsome face and a winning address. Moreover, there is possibly associated with him, both as regards his doings in the House and out of it, a certain atmosphere of chivalry which would insure personality and popu-

larity to a man of much meaner parts. The noble lord is without doubt a favourite with the House; his comely presence, as he rises from below the gangway, not to badger a Ministry with petty criticisms, but to speak forth manly words of truth and soberness, would perhaps be missed as much as any figure in it.

XXVII.

SIR WILLIAM EDMONSTONE.

"THE Admiral," as he is usually termed, is decidedly the oddity, par excellence, of the House. His queer dogmatic individuality makes him, in his own province, quite unique. In certain things he is a model Member of Parliament. He is like the good school-boy, never a moment behind time, but always in his place when the great academy of St. Stephen's begins lessons. We believe it is notorious that he has never once been known even to be absent from prayers; a piece of exemplary conduct in which we fear he has very few rivals amongst the other young gentlemen. As respects this particular phase of good behaviour "the Admiral" gets a certain reward in the shape of retaining his seat for the remainder of the evening. The seat which he first selected was one immediately behind the Leader of the House, on the first bench behind the Treasury Bench; and as he has never been late for prayers, that comfortable corner may be looked upon as exclusively his own. There, night after night, was "the Admiral" to be seen in Mr. Disraeli's time, animating his chief with his hearty cheers, and, perhaps, even bending forward occasionally to whisper an encouraging suggestion in his ear. It is scarcely necessary to remark that he now occupies the same position relatively to Sir Stafford Northcote. But "the Admiral" is the good boy in more important respects than punctuality. He is a rigid and religious observer of discipline; he is never to be found in the wrong lobby; and as for playing truant from a division, or even from a sitting of the House, there must certainly be something very "rotten in the state of Denmark" when such an event as *that* comes to pass. "The Admiral," in truth, must be the very pet and darling of the Whips. They must feel such perfect reliance in him. The notion of ever having to "whip" *him* would be to them monstrous were it not amusing. *He*, whose vote is as safe, or safer, than the Bank of England, and whom only the direst circumstances of sickness or bereavement could prevent from being present to give it! *He*, who is always there at prayers, and on whose patience and constitution the driest of conversations or the lengthiest of sittings has no more effect than a capful of wind on an old salt, but who keeps his place till the very last breath of the words, "that the House do now

adjourn," has issued from Mr. Speaker's lips! *He*, who never wants to "pair," and who sticks to the House till the end of the Session! "If all members were only like our dear Admiral!" is probably what they sometimes say to themselves with a sigh. In that case, no doubt Sir William Dyke and Mr. Winn would have a merry time of it. Nevertheless, in spite of all this admirable behaviour, "the Admiral," as we have said, has his oddities. Suppose we take a peep at him as he sits in his accoustomed place behind Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer. The debate going on is one of some import. A Minister is on his legs vindicating the Government. At regular intervals a crisp "Hear, hear," very like the sharp crack of a Martini-Henry rifle, comes rattling from somewhere close behind him. This is "the Admiral" firing his minute-guns, not of distress, but of approbation and encouragement. As we bend our interested gaze upon him we perceive that he holds in his hand a programme of the evening's proceedings, with which he is vigorously fanning his excited countenance. Presently the Minister sits down, and an Opposition gentleman obtains the ear of the House. A curious change is instantly preceptible in the movements of "the Admiral." He has been sitting full-face to the opposite benches; but now, like lightning, he has whirled himself half round in his place, and presents only his indignant profile to the abhorred party, while the "Hear, hears" inspired by a fearful tone of killing contempt, come more sharply, and the fanning of the now exasperated brow goes on more vigorously than ever. This is "the Admiral's" mode of expressing his profound scorn for any speaker from the opposite side of the House. The attitude may scarcely suggest what was once said of Coriolanus: "It seemed that whatsoever God that moved him were slyly crept into his human powers, and gave him graceful posture;" but it is at least significant of the character that Dr. Johnson loved, "a good hater." So exalted is the Admiral's sense of what is due to martinet obedience and strict discipline, that even when a gentleman on his own side ventures to differ from the Government he will not refrain from a har "Hear, hear!" to mark his reproach or displeasure. This once got him into a little hot water with Sir Walter Barttelot, who, being interrupted by the usual minute-gun, was actually cruel enough to offer to make a present of "the Admiral" to the opposite benches. This was, indeed, "the unkindest cut of all!" Fancy "the Admiral" fanning himself among those unholy ranks! Fancy the stars all falling at once! Fancy chaos come again!

"The Admiral" seldom himself addresses the House; and in this he has shown a wise measurement of his own capacities.

He hardly suggests the idea of one who would charm with eloquence, or amuse with humour, or instruct and assist with the products of a cultivated intellect. The worthy Admiral is probably not much acquainted with "sweetness and light;" there is no poetry in his nature; he is a chip of a ruggedly dogmatic and prosaic old block. Yet "the Admiral" *has* been on his legs; and perhaps the most memorable occasion of his being so was when he spun a yarn to the House of a most thrilling description. He was once in command of a brig, ploughing the stormy main somewhere off the Gold Coast. He slept the sleep of innocence in his cabin; a whisper of mutiny is brought to him; he rushes on deck, armed with revolvers, presents them at the ringleaders, and at once restores order! The moral of this tale of maritime heroism was how necessary it is that we should persist in flogging our sailors. No doubt "the Admiral" was a superb disciplinarian when pacing the quarter-decks of brigs and frigates.

In external appearance "the Admiral" is a slightly-made, wiry man, of middle height, with a somewhat narrow face, distinguished by a considerable quantity of nose. A liberal allowance of this member is, the physiognomists tell us, usually significant of either character or genius. In "the Admiral's" case the balance possibly inclines to the first-named quality. A story once floated about fruitful of illustration on this point. "The Admiral" and Mr. Gladstone happened to attend the same church on the Sunday immediately preceding the day on which the ex-Premier was going to bring forward those Resolutions about which so much fuss was at one time made. Mr. Gladstone was about to partake of the Communion, as a preparation probably for the pious work on which he was shortly to enter. "The Admiral" also intended to communicate; but when he saw in whose company he was, he found it impossible to break bread with one whom he considered so dastard a traitor to his country, and accordingly turned on his heel and left the sanctuary. Could Tory loyalty go further? "The Admiral" has about him a certain old-fashioned formality and pomposity of bearing, which is especially noticeable when he temporarily lays aside his fan and leaves the House for refreshment. Still, notwithstanding his adamantine decorum, we can fancy that "out of school," and in hours of convival relaxation, "the Admiral" might prove himself to be a bit of a humorist in his way, and altogether what our Yankee cousins are fond of designating a "festive cuss." Whether his odd personality is relished by all parties in the House may be questionable; but, beyond all controversy, it affords a certain entertainment to some.

THE LIONS AND THE EAGLES.

A FABLE.

OLD Æsop gave to birds a tongue
To point the moral of his song,
And, taught by him, hear from my string
The double-headed Eagle sing,
As he swoops down upon his prey,
With "Tally ho! and hark away!"

Whene'er the quarry's unprepared,
Or prostrate, age nor sex is spared,
And lust and rapine fills his eye
As he cries screaming from the sky:
"Gorge to the full! all helpless they!
Ho! Tally ho! and hark away!"

The Devil saw—the bird "possessed,"
And promised aid in every quest,
To make a lie appear the truth;
Murder appear a kindly ruth;
In stealing patriot hearts away;
With, "Tally ho! and hark away!"

His eyrie crowns the mountain crest,
Where Ural trends towards the west;
Where, stretching to the south is seen
A valley of perpetual green,
Teeming with life—"Ha! ha! the prey!
Ho! Tally ho! and hark away!"

Nor could the forest's leafty shade,
The tangled brake, the rocky glade,
The cave's recess, nor midnight hour
Give shelter from the Eagle's power;
All trembled, cowering in dismay
At his fell scream,—"Ho! hark away!"

Ere half the valley was subdued,
A Western Lion, rough and rude,
Stood boldly forth—"Dare further go,
And you have me your deadly foe."
"Who cares! *You* shield our rightful prey
And den so far! Ho! hark away!"

From distant eyries eagles flew,
From many a lair the lions drew;
And face to face, with teeth and claw,
One claimed his prey, the other law.
The Devil hails the coming fray,
With, "Tally ho! and hark away!"

Fearing the worst, the subtle bird
Seduced a lion from the herd;
Great rival, he, from rival den,
(The wily partisan of men)
Who echoes now what Eagles say,
With "Tally oh! and hark away!"

Boldly he stumps from lair to lair
As men at Rhyl or Greenwich stair;
Damning his country's righteous fame,
Damning the glory of her name.
The Devil sees the Eagle's sway
And shouts again—"Ho! hark away!"

In proud array the Lion herd
Lay crouched to spring upon the bird,
When, from behind, the Rebel cries,
(His country's power to paralyse),
"Hold! hold! they are our friends! hold! stay!
They're birds of peace! Ho! hark away!"

"Has honour fallen? has duty fled?
Is patriotism palsied, dead?"
In scorn the Lion chieftain cries;—
"All bought and sold!" the bird replies.
The Devil heard the Eagle's say,
And chuckling cried—"Ho! hark away

You, Lions, boast of wealth and power,
But to the might of my rich dower
How many bow before the spell
Thrown o'er the Wether-with-the-bell?
He's mine by paction, come what may—
Ho! Tally ho! and hark away!

"Perish the distant dens!" you cry;
Would Eagles dare? if dare—not die?
Virtue's so cheap, treason so rife;
Dare you proclaim, 'War to the knife,'
Pshaw! treason still should dog and bay—
Ho! Tally ho! and hark away!"

Still the old Lion stout and bold
On every loyal heart keeps hold,
And calmly hears the Traitor rave,
The Eagles' flag, defiant, wave;
Still bars his progress, shields the prey
With "Tally ho! and hark away!"

. . . . . .

Learn, Britons, from the Lions' strife,
How party damns a nation's life,
When hate and envy give it tongue.
Let party sink when nations throng,
And rally round or right or wrong;
Then we'll defy the world's array,
With "Tally ho! and hark away!"

R. COMPTON NOAKE.

HEARTS;

OR, ENGLAND A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

CHAPTER I.

Containing Squire Giffard's reason for marrying; and relating the manner in which his daughter, Honoria, learned what was meant by the threa that she would soon have her nose put out of joint.

HEARTS is an odd name for an estate, and Squire Giffard knew no more why his manor was called so than you do, and cared as little.

The one thing that troubled the Squire was, that he had no son to inherit the fertile lands that had passed in the direct line through so many generations; and that it seemed doubly hard that when he had married late in life for no other end or object than to beget an heir, he should have plagued himself with a wife for nothing.

For he counted as nothing the birth of a daughter; and when, instead of being told that both mother and child were doing well, he was requested by the surgeon to send upstairs the parson of the parish, who happened to be dining with him—although the meal was waiting to be served—the Squire's anger reached its climax as he saw his dinner growing colder and colder, and his wrath found vent in a series of imprecations. So that when his wife sought to propitiate him by sending her own woman to know by what name the weak infant should be half baptised, and to express her humble desire, if it should be agreeable to him, that his child should be called Honoria, after the respected lady, his late most honoured mother, the Squire bade the serving-woman tell her mistress "that one name was as good as another, and she might call it any name she pleased, 'twas all one to him, and did not matter a rush!"

Then he sat sulkily down to table by himself, and ate his beef and drank his ale; growling all the time, and cursing the parson's impudence in taking the liberty of leaving the room before the pudding was brought up.

The surgeon's fears came to naught: and when, in due time, the Squire's wife, with her nurse and baby, proceeded downstairs in a sort of triumphal procession, which had first been formed in the story above, to avert some misfortune otherwise certain to happen, the poor lady soon found that her husband had fallen into all his old-bachelor habits again,—that he drank as deeply, swore

as roundly, and rode to hounds, coursed or shot, according to the season of the year, just as eagerly as ever. He had been so attentive and complaisant to her whims for some months before her illness, that she felt his reglect the more keenly; but she dared not complain.

Several years passed in musing, praying, spinning, sewing, pickling, and preserving, after the praiseworthy fashion set by ladies of her station at the period—that is to say, more than a hundred years ago. And by the time that the little Honoria, who was as beautiful as a cherub, had been fondled by her mother and flattered by her attendants until she had become the most troublesome, self-willed, ill-conditioned little brat that ever turned a house out of windows, the spoilt urchin heard it whispered, first by one, and then by another of the upper servants, that nurse was likely to find somebody in the parsley-bed who would soon put missy's nose out of joint. It was an awful threat—all the more terrible from the mystery overhanging the mode of its fulfilment.

"I don't believe a word of it!" sobbed the child, who had heard the prediction for the twentieth time, and was too proud to confess the misgivings which had driven her, over and over again, into the kitchen garden, to keep watch and ward over the quarter from which the enemy was expected to appear.

One morning, Honoria missed her mamma at the breakfast-table, and when she would have looked for her in her bedchamber, madame's own maid came out of the ante-room, held the child forcibly back, and carried her downstairs, kicking and scratching, and screaming at the very top of her shrill voice, until the poor sick lady, who lay above, half dead from pain and exhaustion, felt her head aching distractedly.

There are some children—and Honoria was one of them—who, if they have a desire to do a forbidden thing, will do it first or last, however sharply they may be looked after.

She was told, from that morning, that she must on no account go near her mamma's room, or make any noise on the stairs; for that if she did, she would be a bad, naughty little girl, and the black man would come and pop her into his bag.

Had anyone told her the truth, she would have moved about on tiptoe, and hardly spoken above her breath when near Mrs. Giffard's chamber; as it was, she grew certain that, in spite of the bright look-out she had kept day by day over the sweet-herbs in the sunny border under the south wall of the kitchen garden, the dreaded stranger had been smuggled into the house at sometime or ther, probably in the night, and she got upon a chair, whenever she could do so unobserved, in order to peep at her face in the looking-glass, and make quite sure that her nose was still in the right place.

Day by day there was a sense of strangeness in all the sayings and doings that were taking place before her that fell coldly upon her little heart, she knew not why.

In the first place, the great rambling old place had never been so quiet since she was born. Not a sound rose from the lower regions. No one seemed ever to laugh either in kitchen or butlery. Let the solitary child creep into which room she would, she found the blinds all down, and the chairs set against the walls in undisturbed order, and an oppressive stillness seemed to rest upon the air from the windows being kept closed.

The silence was terrible.

She missed the baying of her father's old hound, and, although its continual howling had for many weeks been a doleful sound in her ears by night as well as by day, she burst out crying when she was told the Squire had caused it to be shot.

Then madame's own woman kissed her in a pitiful fashion that was new to her, and bid her be a good little maid and not spoil her eyes, but come and see what a pretty bed had been put up for her in a room close to her own; and, try as often as she might to find her way into her mamma's chamber, some one was sure to pounce upon the poor child, take her by the hand, and lead her in another direction.

No one teazed her any longer about the little stranger, and she was too sensitive on the subject to betray the importance she attached to it. Nearly a week passed, during which she gave less trouble than she had ever given before, for she was frightened out of her wits; and, having seen neither her father nor her mother all the time, suffered the cruellest apprehensions lest the new-comer had already taken his place in their affections, and she was for evermore to be kept out of their sight.

The servants were particularly kind, and, as it seemed to her, even compassionate in their behaviour to her, which gave fresh confirmation to her alarming fears.

Then came a day when, to crown her misfortunes, all her pretty frocks were put out of her sight, and one made of ugly black stuff was laid ready for use. She cried to have it taken off, and hated the sight of it; but finding that all the women in the house wore black gowns, and that the Squire had ordered them, she knew it was of no use to complain.

She asked no questions, but waited all day for an opportunity of satisfying her curiosity, and, when the wished-for moment came, she slipped up the broad oak staircase as quietly and swiftly as her little feet could carry her over the numerous shallow steps, and then scudded so fast along the deserted landing that, when she came to the door of her mother's bedroom, her heart fluttered like

a bird, and her small eager fingers trembled; so she could not turn the handle of the door for a minute or two, and when it did, she was not prepared for the sudden way in which it seemed to her startled fancy to turn on its hinges, and the awful manner in which it creaked.

She knew she was doing something she had been forbidden to do, and dreaded she knew not what. It is just how we all feel when conscience pricks us, and we stifle its warnings.

Honoria knew nothing about conscience, but she did not forget the black man who was likely to put her into his bag if she was a naughty, disobedient child. The room, too, was so dark that at first she could not see the objects it contained distinctly, and that made matters worse. She approached the bedstead instinctively directly she ran in, but she saw at once that her mamma was not there, and the curtains were gone, and both bed and bedding removed. She walked up to the toilet-table which was still, like the mirror upon it, tastefully draped with muslin fastened with lace and ribbon, and then her eyes were fascinated by a white satin pincushion she had never seen before, with large letters running over it marked by the heads of the pins stuck into it so as to form the lines—

"May He whose cradle was a manger
Bless and keep the little stranger."

Then the child's fears gave place to fury. She dashed the pincushion on to the ground, crumpled up the lace and ribbon that trimmed the toilet-cover as tightly as ever she could in her little hands; ran to the drawers where she knew her mother's linen was kept, tossed and tumbled it, as she scattered the floor with one article of clothing after another; and then ran dancing up and down over them like a creature possessed, wringing her small hands and crying the while as if her heart would break, and looking upon herself as the most miserable, unfortunate little wretch in the world.

The approach of footsteps was unnoticed by the child in her passion of rage and jealousy, and she felt herself lifted to a great height from the ground in strong arms that she knew to be those of her father even before she had clasped the Squire's bull-neck with her chubby arms, and buried her tear-swollen face, in an agony of shame and grief, on his broad chest.

He said not a word until he set her on her feet in a room opening out of the hall where a table was spread with a feast from which the guests had departed, and which had a cold, desolate look about it, very different from the sight the child had looked forward to every day when she used to be carried into the dining-room after dinner to enjoy the dessert, when she had wondered to see the wax-

lights reflected on the black surface of the gleaming mahogany-table set out with decanters of ruby wine, and dishes of silver and crystal full of tempting fruits, and where her mamma always sat smiling as she stretched out her arms to take her. Worst of all, there sat the old nurse rocking a cradle in which Honoria saw in a moment the long-expected stranger was placidly sleeping.

The Squire took his daughter by the hand, and led her, without speaking a word, close up to the infant.

The old woman held up her fingers. "You must not kiss your little sister yet, deary, for fear you should wake her," said the woman, with an important air peculiar to her office.

Honoria had no such amicable intentions. With the swiftness and suddenness which was a part of her passionate nature, she ran to the table, snatched up the Squire's own pepper-box, which she knew where to find, as it was always placed at her father's right hand, whished off the lid in a second, and flung the contents as well as she could at the baby's little pink face, as it lay, imbedded in lace, on the pillow under the shadow of the hood of the cradle.

Fortunately the mischief she meant to effect was prevented by the missile falling short of the innocent object at which Honoria had taken aim; and before she knew what had come to her, the child was laid across her father's knees and smacked repeatedly in the most painful and ignominous manner for the first time in her life.

"Mamma! mamma!" screamed the child, when at last she was set free and turned out of the room by the Squire—"Mamma! mamma!" she cried at every step, as she clambered up the staircase.

"You must not say mamma, miss," said the servants one after the other, as they met the little girl wandering about the house and calling out the name of their poor mistress, who was, as they knew to their sorrow, both dead and buried.

"You must not call out your poor mamma's name like that, dear," cried the stately housekeeper—"you will grieve your papa,"

Upon which Honoria, who was by no means a good child and remembered her disgraceful whipping with burning cheeks, cried all the more, "Mamma, my own mamma, where are you? why don't you come to me?"

The Squire never forgot her behaviour or forgave it. His wife's death and the contrition she expressed at having a second time disappointed his hopes of a son and heir, had made the hard man soften to the infant she left behind her. He desired his wife's own name of Hester might be given to the motherless child, and it

became the pet and plaything of every creature in the house, from the Squire downwards.

Honoria at length yielded her heart absolutely to the winning graces of her younger sister, and appeared to love her more and more as years passed away, and the lovely girl, no longer a child, budded into the perfection of blushing conscious maidenhood with all its nymph-like charms of person, and its sweet but impossible dreams of perfect bliss in the world it is about to enter.

Honoria Giffard had been the belle of the country balls for three or four years before Hester came out, and had received several offers; but if her own heart had been pierced she hid the wound.

CHAPTER II.

In which Squire Giffard shows his partiality in more ways than one, and Honoria is a second time the sufferer.

THE weather was sultry, although it was only the first week in June; and Squire Giffard fell asleep in the summer-house after dinner, while he sat waiting for his eldest daughter to come and read the newspaper to him.

He was awakened by a voice, sweet and low, but not the one he had expected to hear.

"What would you like me to read first, sir?"

The Squire opened his eyes, and smiled in his daughter Hester's face, as she seated herself beside him.

"Where's your sister, Hetty?"

"I think, sir, she has walked down as far as the boat-house with my cousins. They were talking of rowing for an hour when I left them. Perhaps she has gone too; it is pleasant now on the river."

Hester sighed unconsciously as she let the paper drop listlessly upon the rustic table, and resting her round, white elbows upon it, as the lace ruffles fell back from them, she leaned her head on her hands, with her taper fingers almost hidden in the masses of soft, bright, chestnut hair, which, turned back from her forehead, fell in natural curls over her shoulders. The carnation grew more vivid on her cheeks, and her red lips parted, as her dove-like eye watched the long, pendant branches of the willow as they swayed to and fro, while the rippling waters slid past them, all aglow with the reflection of the luminous sunset.

The Squire chuckled at his own acuteness, as he quietly observed Hester's roseate blushes, and evident absence of mind.

It is said that the heir-apparent rarely finds favour in the eyes of the reigning sovereign; but it is certain that, next to his

daughter Hester, Squire Giffard loved his heir-presumptive and nephew, Roger Giffard, who, with his brother Ralph, was at Hearts when he was not at Oxford.

The Squire had set his heart on at least one marriage taking place between the cousins, and only that morning, when in the hayfields with his nephews, he had learned from Roger that he was in love with Hester, and had therefore in his own mind settled that Ralph should marry Honoria if he had a mind so to do.

The young man had, however, greatly annoyed his uncle by remaining silent while the Squire stated his readiness to aid him in whatever profession he decided upon entering, and had hung his head and looked unhappy.

"Either the young dog wants to wear a red coat, which, with peace just proclaimed, is quite out of the question for a younger son; or he has a hankering after Hetty, which he must learn to get over," thought the shrewd old man, as he looked askance at the younger one.

All this was in the Squire's thoughts when he spoke to Hester, who started violently when her father's voice broke in upon her reverie.

"Why are *you* left behind, I should like to know?" said the old man, testily.

"I thought you wished to hear your newspaper read, sir?"

"Aye, aye, I understand. Your sister preferred the young men's company; and so you stepped dutifully into her place. Read what you like, Hester."

"'*Plantation News.* Barbadoes, April 3, 1763. An express has arrived here from the river Emerary, with advice that one Niels Andries was got thither from Berbices, with 126 negroes. He gives an account that the Creole negroes had revolted, to the number of 3000, having their officers at their head; that they had destroyed ten plantations, and massacred all who attempted to make any resistance, whites, negroes, and Indians, without sparing women and children. That the governor, either through fear, or some other motive, had blown up the fort, with the provisions and ammunition therein, and saved himself on board a Dutch ship.'"

"D—— his cowardly soul!" said the Squire, with his face quite purple with rage.

"'So that the rebels had not had much difficulty to make themselves masters of the whole coast. They have invited the negroes of the other colonies to join them, assuring them that as soon as they had entirely subdued the colony of Berbices, they designed to go into the other colonies, to kill all the whites, whom they would not suffer any longer to have dominion over them.'"

"See, what harm is done by giving authority to a man unequal to sudden emergencies. Had that rascal of a governor, instead of thinking of nothing but the safety of his own stinking carcase, proclaimed martial law, and strung up one or two of the ringleaders as soon as he could lay hands on them, the rising would have been put down at once, and all those bloody murders prevented. The skulking hound! It chokes me to think of his running away from his post in the hour of danger."

The Squire would have had a fit of apoplexy could he have foreseen that a century later, by following the course he now recommended, the Governor of Jamaica would be put on his trial for wilful murder, instead of receiving the thanks of a grateful country for his courage and promptitude. Happily Squire Giffard little guessed what we should be doing in 1867, so he only said with an expression of intense disgust:

"Read something else, lass, to put it out of my head."

"'Scotland,'" murmured Hester, timidly, as her eyes glanced down the columns of the newspaper. "Do you care about hearing the account of laying the foundation stone of the bridge over the Tweed at Coldstream, papa?"

"No, I don't," growled the Squire; "the Scots come into England too fast as it is."

"I see no need of building a bridge over the Tweed."

"Who's to pay for it?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," replied Hester.

"Read, child, read. You'll soon find the money all comes out of John Bull's breeches-pocket."

Hester resumed her task:

"'The inscription on the stone is as follows:—The Parliament of Great Britain having allowed £4000 sterling for building this bridge——"

"Didn't I tell you so?" interrupted the Squire.

"'The first stone was laid by the Right Hon. Alexander Earl of Home, in presence of the Trustees, who met on May 18th, 1763, in the third year of the reign of King George III., being the month in which the union of the two kingdoms commenced fifty-six year ago.'"

"Four thousand pounds sterling! Not beggarly pounds Scotch, mind you! My Lord Bute ought to be made to repay it. Heaven be praised! we have kicked him out of office at last, and I am ready to take my Bible-oath that he never comes in again. Not that we have gained much by having George Grenville in his place. Those who live longest will see the most. There will be great changes before long. Try again, Hester, you have been rather unlucky."

"'St. James's, June 1st,'" read Hester, nervously. "'This day the following address was presented to his Majesty, and read by Doctor Fothergill, accompanied by a deputation from the people called Quakers, introduced by the Lord of his Majesty's Bedchamber in Waiting?'."

"Bother the people called Quakers!" said the Squire hotly, "and the peace, and all who had a hand in bringing it about—from my Lord Bute downwards. Why did the House of Commons follow the speech from the Throne like a pack of hounds, instead of minding what Pitt said to them, when he spoke so well, too?—three hours at a stretch, in spite of the gout! Talk of the libels Wilkes was clapped into the Tower for—why, bad and vile as they are, they are not more shameful than the conduct of the British Parliament. However, my Lord Chief Justice Pratt did his duty."

"'Next month, I suppose, there are more than a dozen causes to be tried at Guildhall between journeyman printers (supposed to have been employed on the *North Briton*, No. 45) and the Crown, for false imprisonment by King's messengers, in virtue of a Secretary of State's warrant."

"A pretty scandal that will be! Down with my Lord Bute, I say again, and God bless the King and the Prince of Wales!" The Squire lifted his hat reverently at the last words.

Hester, who cared nothing for politics, had been amusing herself by reading how "the Queen, in order to draw his Majesty's attention, and to keep him longer at St. James's, had desired several ladies to appear at Court in their masquerade dresses before they went to the Duke of Richmond's ball; so that by this tender stratagem his Majesty's did not go from St. James's to the Queen's palace till near ten o'clock; when, on suddenly throwing back the window-shutters of her Majesty's palace, his Majesty was agreeably surprised with the view of a magnificent temple and bridge, finely illuminated with about 400 glass lamps, erected in the garden. The painting on the front of the temple represented the King giving peace to all parts of the earth, and at his Majesty's feet were the trophies of the numerous conquests made by Britain, and beneath them were a group of figures representing Envy, Malice, Detraction, &c., tumbling headlong, like the angels in Milton."

"The Queen has been preparing such a beautiful surprise for the King, papa. The paper calls it 'the most superb piece of scenery ever exhibited in England.' How I should have liked to have seen it! And, after looking at it, they sat down to a cold supper of one hundred dishes, and an illumined dessert, with a fine band playing all the time."

"I am very glad you have found something to amuse yourself

with, Hester; I can't say that you have read out anything yet that I have cared to hear. But I am not angry with you, my love,—it is all Honoria's fault, who knows exactly how I like the newspaper read. I wish you would go and look for her."

Hester rose, and putting on her hat, walked along the path by the river, listening for the splash of oars. When she had gone a short distance beyond the garden-gate through the hay-fields, she saw Honoria coming slowly towards her. The large meadow she was crossing had another path which led through a filbert plantation to the back of the house.

As Hester approached Honoria she walked rapidly away from her, and struck into this path, and when, after running and walking by turns, Hester, panting for breath, was near enough to beg her sister to stop for her, Honoria, with an imperious wave of her hand, bade her turn back.

"But papa wants you, Honoria."

"I cannot come. Go back, Hester."

Hester, with tears springing in her eyes, stood still. Honoria appeared to hesitate a moment, then, turning so as fully to front her sister, she fixed her flashing eyes upon the trembling girl, while she cried vehemently:

"I hate you deadlily; you have stolen my lover!"

Then, with swift steps, and carrying her head proudly, Honoria passed out of Hester's sight.

CHAPTER III.

Roger and Hester come to a satisfactory understanding, and end by dismissing Honoria entirely from their thoughts.

For a few moments, transfixed to the spot where she had been standing when Honoria spoke to her, Hester stood uncertain which way to go. She no longer attempted to follow her sister; she dared not return to her father, lest he should question her concerning Honoria; and she shrank with burning cheeks from meeting her cousins after the cruel charge that her sister had brought against her. She said "her cousins," yet even in secret commune with her own innocent heart she refused to believe that it could be Roger of whom her sister was jealous.

Yes, it was only Ralph she dreaded to see, for it was Ralph who had that morning told her he loved her dearly, and to whom she had replied that she loved him quite as dearly, even as much as if he were really her brother instead of only her cousin; upon which, to her bewilderment, he had uttered a cry of impatience and broken from her in anger.

With Roger it was altogether different. He had never mentioned the word love in her hearing, and he gave her his confidence so entirely, that had he cared for Honoria, or, indeed, for anyone, he would have told her as a matter of course. It had been just the same when they were but children—Roger never willingly spent an hour apart from Hester. Her tastes were acquired from him, her employments irksome unless he had some connection with their use and end. Hester felt less her own self than a part of Roger. He could direct her by a glance, or instruct her by an accent, when she was desirous to know his opinion or to consult his wishes.

But Ralph was not the same affectionate Ralph he used to be to either when they were all together. Hester felt that of late much of his heart had been hidden from Roger and herself. She concluded that he had not the slightest suspicion of Honoria's attachment. If he had, Hester's chain of reasoning came to nothing, for she decided that as her sister was infinitely her superior, it was only in despair of winning Honoria that Ralph could possibly have thought of herself save as a cousin and dear friend.

Honoria, whose beauty was so queenly, whose nature was so lofty, whose heart was so generous—it must all come right in time; Hester felt sure of that. Her life had hitherto been one day of cloudless peace and happiness, and it was not in her disposition to dwell upon evil or anticipate sorrow. The night was not yet. So she sat down on the sweet-smelling hay heaped against the stem of an old hawthorn-tree, and began to dream of pleasures in store for her soon in a wondrous city full of colleges, each having more claims to renown than the others in the opinions of the students belonging to it. She fancied herself walking through the Christ Church meadows, and listening to the "bonny Christ Church bells," always with Roger beside her. For it was Oxford during the forthcoming Encænia she was trying to paint from Roger's description. Thither her cousins had persuaded the Squire to promise to take his daughters during Commemoration week, and they were anticipating the odes and orations and music they were to hear, for the celebration was to be held with greater pomp than usual in honour of the peace. There was to be a performance of the Pastoral of "Acis and Galatea," conducted by Dr. Hayes; and on two later evenings the "Messiah," and the oratorio of "Judas Maccabæus," to be honoured by the Chancellor's presence. Roger had told, too, how Magdalen College was required by its statutes to entertain the Kings of England and their eldest sons whenever they might deign to visit Oxford; and how many had been feasted right loyally in the Gothic Hall, with its quaint, fanciful carvings, and beautiful picture of the patron saint; and how fat bucks and

marks to purchase wine had testified afterwards to the Sovereign's gratitude. Also how grim Oliver Cromwell, with the chief officers of his army, had been sumptuously entertained there, and in such good humour afterwards as to play at bowls on the College-green. Then there were the water-walks, with the great oak at their entrance, said to be six hundred years old; and so many fine, paintings and sculptures to be seen elsewhere in all the different colleges, above all at Christ Church.

It was no use to try to imagine what it would all be like beforehand; she must wait to see everything, with Roger to explain every subject and give it fresh interest through his learning and love of art. Roger was enthusiastic about all such matters, but there was nothing but what Roger knew.

Just as Hester arrived at this most satisfactory conclusion a posey of wild roses came flying over her shoulder, and, looking up, she saw Roger.

Knowing that he had been the subject of her thoughts but the moment before, she could not for the life of her help blushing violently, and, seeing that she did so gave him such deep pleasure that it kindled in his honest, manly face, and made him look ten times handsomer than he did before, while his eyes sent glances into hers that seemed to melt her soul, and fuse their two beings into one.

"How I startled you, Hetty!" exclaimed Roger, sitting down beside his cousin. "What were you thinking about? But I can guess, you vain little puss! You were thinking what colour your next gown should be, or of what pattern you would have a new satin petticoat quilted. You never seem to me to be dressed alike twice; but, somehow, everything you wear becomes you, and you always outshine every girl who comes near you; if that be any satisfaction to you, I should be sorry to withhold so important a fact."

"Ah, Roger, all you say shows how little you know about the matter! It is Honoria whose taste you are complimenting, not mine. I never choose even a ribbon for my hair without consulting her,—if I did I should not like it."

Then Hester suddenly remembered that she was in terrible disgrace with her sister, and looked as if she was going to cry.

"You must learn more confidence in your own judgment now you are a woman, Hetty. For instance, if a lover were to ask your hand, you would not wait for Honoria to give her consent, I should hope."

Hester, remembering how promptly she had replied to Ralph but a few hours before, did not like to answer the question.

"Hester, it is but a year since you covered me up in the hay,

as I lay at your feet under this very tree. Why have you not done so now?"

"Because—because you know, as well as I do," said Hester, blushing again; and, putting her little hand into the hay, she added, as she drew it back, "because the dew is falling fast, and it is time we were both indoors."

"No, Hester; it is because you are no longer a child, and do not care for your old playfellow."

"I do," said Hester from her heart.

"Do you know what would please my uncle better than anything in the world, my little Hetty? That you should be my wife. Will you give me your promise, Hetty?"

Hester's hand seemed to her of its own accord to find its way into Roger's, and, once caught in his strong fingers, it was useless for her to try to extricate it from his clasp—besides, the next moment he caught her to his heart.

Roger felt that, however great the rapture of encircling her slender form for the first time in his arms, it was very tantalising. He longed deeply, poor fellow, to kiss her tell-tale eyes, her mantling cheeks, but, above all, her exquisite little red mouth, breathing love and youth between rows of pearls; but he felt as if it would be a profanation to raise her drooping head so closely pressed to his heart. So, drawing a long, deep sigh, he released her from his embrace, and contented himself by kissing the tips of her fingers before he laid them within his arm, and in that discreet and distant fashion he walked through the garden with her, every now and then looking under her hat at the pretty, shy girlish face which was so resolutely turned away from him, and murmuring at intervals incoherent expressions testifying to his love, admiration, and gratitude.

Fortunately there was no creature within hearing. A bat flew across their path, and the owls were screeching as they came out in the twilight after their prey. What care young lovers for old wives' superstitious tales? To win belief they should be told in whispers to those who tremblingly watch beside sick-beds at night, and children shudder as they hear the elleirge wind among the churchyard elms, or the bat beating against the window pane, or the white owl's frightful hoot repeated from the ruined tower; or to such as lie awake, thinking of those who are tossed on unknown seas after bidding all they love a last adieu in thought, while gazing on the stars, soon seen no more beneath the unfamiliar Southern Cross. Hester and Roger had eyes and ears only for each other; to their joyous frame of mind there was no ugsumness in the bat's scream, no warning in the owl's unearthly note.

CHAPTER IV.

Honoria is alone with her despair.

HONORIA rose from her knees that night crying: "It is a curse, not a blessing, I am asking—I cannot forgive her! The creed and the prayer can nevermore be uttered by me except with lying lips and a false heart. The forgiveness of sins! Forgive as we hope to be forgiven! Better the Jewish dispensation with an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth! Better the relentless warfare of the savage on his enemies, the vengeance of the heathen in retaliation for injuries! Was it for this I forgot the shame I suffered when I first saw her, the misery I endured even before her birth, and the death of my dear mother by which it was purchased? My mother! oh, my mother! if you could but hear me! No one but you ever loved me? Fool that I was to fancy my sister's affection for me equalled mine for her; while every night she lay down beside me with all her heart hidden from me. If I had known, if I had but known long years ago, that they loved each other, at least I might have spare myself the humiliation I underwent but now. Refused—refused——"

Honoria sat beneath the open window of her chamber in the gray light of dawn. It was the hour when life is at its lowest ebb in human hearts, and when the dying, who have lingered gasping through the long night, give up their souls by legions. Cold and chill, with her perfect face pale as the sheeted dead, and her long glittering hair falling unbound, and her feet bare beneath the loose white robe, Honoria had sat there for hours, with her hands clasped under her chin, and her stony eyes watching the stars as they faded before the light that rose slowly in the east, until it flooded the golden hills, and rolled back the white mist from the silver meads beside the winding river.

"I and he should have mated. Why should he pass me over to choose Hester? It is unjust, for the elder to give place to the younger. Had I been born a son instead of a daughter every sorrow of my life would have been spared. It is unjust that I should suffer for an accident which it was not in my power to alter. I am so young, too, and feel such health glowing through my frame that the past years may be but the beginning of a long, long life. Yet, all through the years to come I shall feel the influence of the scorching blight that now consumes me. What have I left to live for? Love is the essence for a woman's nature, and without something or somebody to love, what is her life?—selfish, purposeless, hopeless, aimless! To those who love truly no second love can come. Who, that has cherished one image for years, can dismiss

each treasured association from their memory? Doubtless many never knew such passionate love as mine by which every look, every word has been indelibly fixed on my remembrance. Perhaps they are to be envied. Certainly they are better fitted for this wretched world we live in than such an one as I. Yet they never know the bliss I have experienced. Oh, the rapturous hours I can never know again! Oh, the joys that were mine but yesterday! To gaze upon Roger's face, to hear his voice, his mere step upon the stair, the whistle by which he called his dog, even his laugh upon the summer wind! But to think of him as near made me tremble from head to foot. The touch of his hand sent a thrill to my finger-tips. When I rode with him I longed for our return, that I might be in his arms for a moment as he lifted me out of the saddle. I envied even the caresses he gave his spaniel. I could have lain at his feet and kissed the ground he walked on. What does Hester know of such feelings? A mere child in heart, and but sixteen years of age. Yet that is not too young to love, for I, who am only twenty-two, have loved him for five years—not, as I have loved him this summer, with a passion that devours every other thought. Oh, it has been madness indeed,—all passions, I suppose, are madness when at their height. How should I have felt if I had heard of his death? Would it have been worse to bear than this?—to know he lives for another, and will never be mine? The Roger I loved is in very truth dead. There is no longer love in his eyes for me. Nevermore for me will there be music in his voice. For Hester will it melt into melody, as he pours his love-tale into her willing ears. His laugh jars on me now, and fills me with exquisite pain. When I hear his steps my heart sinks and the colour fades out of my face. When he took my hand and bade me good night, a sudden faintness made me cold as death, my knees shook under me, and I could scarcely stand. How could I escape from the continual torture his presence will inflict? I, who have desired it as the starving covet food, the dying long for salvation. The first day of his return was to me as of the beginning of the summer; music, warmth, and light came all at once—Roger was there! Even if he had chosen anyone else I might have had sufficient fortitude to nerve myself for my fate; I should still have had my sister; but now I can never endure even to see her! How she prattled her common-place prettinesses as she sought my forgiveness for she knew not what, the simpleton! Ralph, indeed! As if I, who have known Ralph only as Roger's foil, could even see him when Roger was by; or, after looking upon Roger, could turn from him to Ralph without noticing his inferiority in mind, person, everything. Then, to crown my indignation, Hester fell asleep be

fore she had quite finished repeating the words which were daggers to my heart. Had he said such words to me; had I heard for the first time the outpourings of his affection, could I have slept calmly, knowing that he lay under the same roof and that his thoughts were fixed on me? Happily, Roger has been too honourable to betray my unhappy secret even to Hester, and she will never know that she has been preferred to me; he will conceal it if only to save her pain."

As Honoria spoke, she lifted up a crumpled letter that lay on the carpet at her feet, and began to read it.

"He hopes I shall soon learn to love him as a brother. He will ever feel that I am his Hester's dear and only sister, and his own in being hers; also his most valued and dearest friend next to her. Folly! folly! folly! as if that were possible. I abhor the very name of friendship. Hate and love are words whose meaning is unmistakeable, but friendship is a word that means anything or nothing."

After blaming Honoria as much as you will, you must make some allowances for her.

The unfortunate girl, although gifted with rare beauty and strong sense, had indeed been unlucky both in her disposition and the circumstances under which it had been developed. The evil that was latent in her nature might in early years have been rooted out by judicious culture of her better qualities. Instead of which it had been fostered, alike by her mother's blind affection and her father's severity—pampered into selfishness and then punished for the faults that sprang with the rapid growth of weeds in a rich soil left neglected and fallow. She tried to do right. She had from the time of her mother's death resolutely conquered the pain of seeing Hester better loved by her father, but those who fancied her of a calm nature had not the slightest insight into her real character. It was her inflexible determination and strength of will which enabled her to preserve an unruffled composure when most girls of her age would have shown their spleen in pettish anger or transient spite.

Such ebulitions are more natural to the young than the restraint Honoria exercised over herself, which was only surface-deep, and it was the concentrated and repressed passion of years which had now, like a flood overleaping the barriers which had hitherto restrained it, overturned the good resolutions she had kept so firmly from childhood.

Hester had been all the more alarmed by the violence of Honoria's manner towards her in the hayfield, because it was the first time she had known her sister to behave unkindly to her.

When they retired for the night, Hester remembered that in

the absorbing pleasure she had felt in hearing Roger's declaration of love, she had entirely forgotten the trouble occasioned in her breast by her sister's words. Since Roger had avowed his passion for her she felt more sure than ever that it was on account of Ralph she had provoked her sister's reproaches, and she thought Honoria's fears would be entirely set at rest when she knew Roger's troth was plighted to her. Departing a little from the truth in her over anxiety to set things straight, Hester said that for months and months, her love for Roger and Roger's love for her had been beyond the love of cousins.

Unconsciously piercing her sister's heart by every word she spoke, she prattled for hours after they were in bed about Roger this and Roger that; and then Honoria, after a brief silence, asking her a question, received no answer; and, rising on her elbow to look at her, found, as she had suspected, that Hester, quite tired and exhausted by the tumultuous happiness that had agitated her since sun-down, was now lying with sealed eyelids and parted lips, breathing as softly and regularly as a little child who had fallen asleep with a new top in its hand.

Honoria sprang out of bed unable to endure the torture of contrasting the hurricane in her own heart with her sister's repose. Then she knelt down to repeat the prayer we call the Lord's. Surely, only a divine and perfect being could have conceived the divine and perfect words so many erring creatures have repeated, heedless of their full meaning. When she would have prayed to be forgiven even as she forgave, her throat grew dry, and she started to her feet. Then poured from her fully and freely the pent-up passion—all the love, all the hate, all the jealousy, stored through her youth. Then like a torrent swept her fury, and tore the barriers to pieces that had cost her so much labour and self-sacrifice in their erection.

This is but the attempt to pourtray a once-living woman, not to delineate the heroine of one of the sensational tales so much in vogue. The reader need not fear that Hester's fair bosom will be pierced by a stiletto, or that poison will be dropped into her cup.

As the sunshine streamed in upon Honoria, she had taken a resolution—it had nothing deadly in its character; gently closing the curtains she drew back from the window, and laid herself quietly in bed.

Honoria's resolve was by no means creditable to her, but neither did it contain the elements of tragedy, according to the popular acceptation of that word. She simply contemplated her own marriage.

A former suitor of hers was expected at Hearts on the following day, and in order to escape as soon as possible from a home that

had become hateful to her, Honoria determined to encourage Captain Compton to renew the proposals she had previously rejected.

Captain Compton was a young officer who had been thought quite a hero by the good people of Danesbury, when he came from America, the preceding autumn.

The distress occasioned by the loss of Newfoundland, in Dartmouth, Weymouth, Pool, and all the western ports—the sufferings of thirty thousand people, who had depended on the fisheries for support—had made the bearer of the French colours once hoisted on the Fort of St. John's, and of Colonel William Amherst's despatch to the Earl of Egremont announcing its surrender, more welcome than can at this distance of time be imagined.

It was known, too, that Captain Compton had been serving in Bragg's Regiment, when General Wolfe fell at its head, on the heights above Quebec, and that he had been present during the whole of the campaign, so ably planned by Major-General Amherst during the following summer. Present when the posts of Fort Levi, Isle au Noix, Isle Royale, and finally Montreal, were taken by that brave commander, and thus Canada became a British province.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN INDIAN MAGISTRATE.

MINOR OR NO MINOR, OR, THE MOVE FOR A HUSBAND.

SOWDA MOVI DABEA, commonly called Bhoui, was a young Hindu widow of the Pirálee caste, who had been married at the early age of nine, and had lost her husband a few months after. The marriage was never consummated, and she had never lived in her husband's family, or under the protection of any of his kinsmen. She had always lived with her widowed mother and her brothers, named Hurro and Kinno, in their house at Chinsurah, where every endeavour was made to keep her happy.

"I live with tears in my eyes. Of what use is life to me? What do I live for? All around me are joyful and prosperous. My portion alone is misery."

Thus bitterly did Bhoui frequently bemoan her condition. But she always found one at her side who sympathised fully with her griefs, a mother who was never weary of listening to her complaints, never weary in doing all she could to comfort her.

"Oh, Bhoui! Be a good girl, and don't grieve for what cannot be mended. You are young; be hopeful, and life will not be altogether dark to you for all the loss you have suffered. Yes, you will, you can be happy yet, if you will only attend diligently to your books and your religious duties. Your brothers love you, and I love you also—how much I cannot tell; and our love ought to replace the love you have lost."

Bhoui never contradicted her mother, but she felt that there was nothing in her words really to revive her heart. What could books give to her, or the love of her brothers, or even that of her mother, to make up for the love and devotion of a husband which was denied to her? She was assiduous with her books, and sat up long daily with her instructress, a female convert, to make what she could out of them. But she did not benefit much thereby, for her mind had no inclination in that direction; nor did the female convert know how properly to direct it. The whole object of the latter, in fact, was to induce her to become a convert like herself. She was paid for this task by the Society she served. The plea of instruction was only the "open sesame" which gave her the opportunity to work up to the end which she had orders to attain; and all her labours were confined to reading out passages from the Bible to

Bhoui, and to explain to her all the present and prospective advantages which her conversion would confer on her.

"See, Bhoui, if you become a convert how happy you would be. You have lost a husband, but Christ himself will be as a husband to you!"

"How? Does Christ descend to the earth to make love to the daughters of men as our Krishna did? Krishna had 16,000 mistresses on the earth; how many females has Christ reserved for himself?"

"Oh, that I don't know. All I have heard from the *Padree Sahebs* is that the virgins who devote their lives to Christ become his brides in heaven."

"In heaven! That must be a very far place to reach, I fancy. How does that remedy our misery on the earth?"

"Why, you can have a husband on the earth also, if you wish it. You are a handsome girl and can get a *Saheb* for your husband."

"But don't *Sahebs* stink? They don't anoint their bodies with mustard-oil or turmeric, as we do, and must smell very offensively. No, I should not like to have a stinking husband. I would prefer a native to a European for a bed-fellow."

"Then you can get a native very easily. There are many handsome male converts who would be delighted to have you."

"But there are no converts of the Pirálee caste, I am told. How can I get married beyond the pale of my own caste?

Ah, Bhoui! we Christians have no caste; we hold all mankind to be of one caste."

"Yes, I have heard mother say so, that the Mlech'bas are casteless, and, therefore, not to be touched, for their touch is pollution. I would lose my caste if I became a Christian, and no one would touch me."

"But why should you fear that? As a Pirálee you are casteless already. Do not all good Hindus regard the Pirálees as half-castes, a hybrid race that is neither Brahman nor Sudra? They detest you as casteless; but amongst us there are no prejudices of that kind at all."

"Well, surely, it is very tempting, and I am so absurdly foolish that at times I have really a mind to go off with you. But then that would mortally offend my mother and my brothers."

"Oh, Bhoui! be reasonable. You have no more decision than a child. What do you care if your mother and brothers get angry with you? Once out of this house, I can place you where their power can never reach you; and when you get a nice husband, you yourself will not care either for your mother or your brothers."

The edifying instruction thus imparted by the tutoress had its full effect on the ignorant mind to which it was communicated; the temptations to become a convert were too great for Bhoui to resist;

and leaving the protection of her mother and brothers, she went off with the tempter to find shelter at the Mission premises in Kámar Bógan-street, under the auspices of the Rev. Mr. Brown and a convert named Bájikar.

. . . . . .

"They have made a goose of the silly girl. What can we do for her now?" asked one brother of the other in vexation.

"I really don't know that much can be done to extricate her from their toils. We had better try the law courts though, and see if we cannot induce them to interfere."

A charge of kidnapping was accordingly preferred against Messrs. Brown and Bájikar in the chief court of Chinsurah, which led to the issue of a writ of *habeas corpus* by it against them. To this return was made by the personal appearance of the widow in court, and the statement of the defendants that she had never been under any restraint. She had come to the Mission premises, they said, of her own free will and accord, without the use of any force, threat, persuasion, or inducement; and being of lawful age had, in the exercise of her own discretion, accepted the rite of baptism after a three years' study of Christianity.

The case represented a contest between Christianity and Hinduism, between the gospel-trumpeter and the heathen guardian, and received the greatest attention from the court by which it was adjudicated. The Hindus attributed the conversion of the girl to the missionaries having held out to her the inducement of an early marriage with some person professing the Christian faith; but this charge was indignantly denied by the missionaries, who, in their turn, affirmed that the relatives of the girl had held out to her the inducement of marriage with a wealthy zemindar, in Brahmo fashion, if she would return to them. The presiding judge had after this an interview with the young proselyte, and he stated from the bench that he found her to be very ignorant on matters of general information, and exceedingly ill-informed on the subject of Christianity; and he characterised the step taken by her of leaving the society of those who had been about her all her life to go amongst strangers whose very names she did not know, as very dangerous. The court, however, had only one point to consider, namely, whether the girl was or was not possessed of a personal discretion to choose for herself in the matter. The contention on one side was that she was barely fourteen years old, on the other that she was upwards of seventeen, and nearer to eighteen. The judge held that she was above seventeen, and, therefore, outside the class of minors whom the Penal Code impliedly deprived of all choice in the matter of their own freedom. As in the eye of the law, then, there was no disqualification to prevent the girl from

choosing for herself, the application to return her to the custody of her relations was refused.

A short time after the above decision, Sowda Movi apostatised from Christianity and became a Brahmo, and she was then married by a Brahmo gentleman according to Brahmo rites.

"I left the home of my brothers for a husband," said she; "and since Christianity could render no help to me in that search, what alternative was there for me but to try elsewhere?"

THE "BIDYARATNA," OR, THE GEM OF LEARNING.

An English traveller, named Archer, was passing by Nawabgunge, towards Hooghly, when he saw a man suspended from a bamboo rafter in the roof of an outhouse of the thannah, with his hands tied behind his back, and screaming loudly from the effects of the beating and torture to which he had been subjected. At the time when Mr. Archer arrived at the spot there was no one about the sufferer. They had all fled on his approach, leaving their victim suspended, to be released by the Englishman if he wished it. Mr. Archer lost no time in getting him down and releasing him, and then the sufferer narrated the circumstances under which he had come to be so strangely dealt with.

A watch belonging to one Captain Rodger had been stolen from his residence at Barrackpore, and this having been reported to the police, the Daroga of Nawabgunge, who was named Gooroo Brassono Bidyaratna, had proceeded to the spot personally to hold the usual inquiry. The Daroga was a high caste Brahman, and a man of education, having obtained the title of *Bidyaratna*, or "gem of learning," from an assembly of learned *pundits*, after close examination. He had then accepted the office of a Daroga, but only as a stepping-stone to the higher office of a deputy-magistrate. "You must pass through the narrow road to get to the highway, Bidyaratna," were the words of his patron, Mr. Hallam, and the gem of learning had bowed acquiescence to the sage advice. "And to get released from the common track you must make yourself so thoroughly useful in your department that you might be easily picked out;" and the gem had again bowed to this additional remark. Bidyaratna had ever since displayed great activity and zeal in the public service; but, though he was well-educated, he did not appreciate fully the difference between right and wrong, not having a fair share of common sense as distinguished from book-learning.

"Will you be able to find out the thief, Daroga?" asked Captain Rodger, of the Bidyaratna, when the latter arrived at Barrackpore.

"Yes, sir, I hope so, provided you allow me to examine all your servants fully."

"Of course you are at liberty to do that. I am going out now," said the Captain, leaping into his saddle; "but you can arrest as many of my servants as you like, and do what you want with them."

Two servants were arrested by the Bidyaratna and carried off to the thannah, and of these one named Ram Shaba Gereiri, was the man rescued from maltreatment by Mr. Archer. He was taken to the thannah and locked up in the guard-room for the night; but, as he would confess nothing, he was tied and suspended on the following morning in the manner stated, and beaten for one hour and a half, when the sudden appearance of an Englishman at the thannah forced his persecutors to bolt.

"What am I to do with you now, Gereiri; would you like to go back to your master?"

"No, sir; as he might send me again to the Daroga, to be treated in the same manner as before."

"Well, then, come with me, and I shall leave you with the district magistrate. He will be the best man to inquire into both, the cases of theft and torture."

This was accordingly done, only Mr. Archer, not knowing to what district Nawabgunge belonged, took Gereiri to the Magistrate of Hooghly, that place being on his way. From Hooghly, Gereiri was sent down to Alipore, the headquarters of the twenty-four Pergunahs Magistrates, with a statement of the circumstances under which the man had been left at Hooghly, and simultaneously the Magistrate received a representation from the learned Doraga, complaining that a thief arrested by him had been forcibly rescued from custody by a European traveller.

The Magistrate's reply to the Daroga was very brief. "The man you refer to is with me now. I shall shortly proceed to Nawabgunge to inquire personally into the double cases of torture and theft."

There was no evidence against Gereiri as to the theft of the watch, so that case, as far as he was concerned, was easily disposed of; while as respects his torture all the statements made by him were confirmed by eye-witnesses living at Nawabgunge, and by the admission of the thannah Jemádár and four burkundanzes who had carried out the Daroga's orders. At the Sessions Court the Gem of Learning endeavoured to prove an *alibi*, by urging that he was absent from the thannah on the day on which Gereiri stated he had been illused, and was altogether ignorant of what had occurred; but the evidence to the contrary was overwhelming, both the village people and the police burkundanzes asserting that all the orders for torture proceeded from him, and that he was present throughout the time it was inflicted.

The Bidyaratna was convicted along with his five thannah subordinates, and the first, as the most guilty of the lot, was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500; while the others were sentenced to two years' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 each. We are unable to say whether the Government availed itself of the Bidyaratna's erudition in the higher sphere of a deputy-magistrate after he had worked out his term of imprisonment. If it did so it must have been on the principle widely recognised that a bad Daroga necessarily makes a good Magistrate.

THE IRATE DOCTOR.

THERE was much confusion and alarm one morning in the humble dwelling of one Mahomed Hossein, a native of Alimpore, in Dacca, who followed the profession of *bickreewálla*, or purchaser of old goods. The man was suffering from an attack of cholera, and not he alone, but a child, his sister's son, was also sick of the same disease, and was so far gone that its little life was despaired of. Besides the sufferers there were only three women in the house—namely, the mother, the wife, and the sister of Mahomed Hossein, and between them all they first raised a howl, as not knowing what to do under the circumstances, after which the second and the third ran out distractedly in search of a doctor.

Their good neighbours told them where doctors were to be found. There was the *kobiraj*, Baroo, who occupied an unmistakeable hut, underneath a *sujna* tree, at a distance of about half a mile from Mahomed Hossein's house; and there was the *hukeem*, Omed Ali, who lived in Kazeeparah, which was equally distant, but in another direction. The result was that two doctors were brought in at about the same time, the *kobiraj* by the sister, and the *hukeem* by the wife, and they took separate charge of each patient—Baroo of the child, and Omed Ali of the master of the house.

There was no doubt as to the reality and danger of the sickness in either case, and the doctors, of course, looked grave over their respective patients, a well-understood trick with all members of the healing art, to augment their fees. Nor were the women unwilling to pay fairly according to their means. A retaining fee of one rupee was paid down to each man at once, final payment being deferred, as usual with the poor, till the recovery of the patients. 'No cure, no pay' is an excellent principle, and might be universally adopted with considerable advantage.

In the present case there was complete cure of both patients, and the doctors called again, one eight days and the other ten days after, to receive their rewards. Baroo came first, and, as his patient

had been in a worse condition even than the master of the house, the mother of the child gave expression to her gratitude by giving him two copper dishes and a silver trinket, which were thankully received; but Mahomed Hossein was not disposed to be equally liberal towards the *hukeem*, to whom he proffered a *dhoti* and a *lotah* only.

"Son of a dog!" exclaimed the *hukeem*, "how dare you offer to me a poorer reward than what you have given to a Kaffir mountebank, a vile Hindu druggist?"

The convalescent patient did not venture to reply; but his wife urged that the child had been in greater danger even than her husband, which accounted for the difference in the value of the articles offered for the acceptance of the two doctors respectively.

"Was your husband really in less danger, woman, than the child? At all events he is in much greater danger now, I assure you;" and without further ado the incensed doctor began to strike his patient first with a stick, and then with the rod of an old fishing net.

"Hold! hold!" cried out all the women of the house together, rushing in a body against the *hukeem* to disarm him; but he ran forward and, getting hold of a *dao*, hacked his patient with it across the neck.

Mahomed Hossein died that very night. The doctor was sentenced to transportation for life.

THE DOOBAY BROTHERS.

Two brothers, Bhobanydeen Doobay and Chokilal Doobay, were returning from a pilgrimage to Jagganath to their home in Bundelkund, by the route of Bydanath. When they had reached the village of Ashna, in Beerbhoom, they heard a shouting in their rear, and saw a party of eight or ten men making up to them.

"If you have lost your way, friends, we can make out the track for you," laughingly observed the new comers to the two brothers.

"Oh, you are very kind," answered Chokilal, rather severely; "but we have not lost our way—we know it well enough for our purpose."

"You are just the persons, then, who can help us out of our difficulty, for, truth to say, we do not know whither we are going. We are bound for Benares, *viâ* Bydanath. Will you be so good as to direct us aright?"

"With great pleasure," answered Chokilal. "Your way is ours. We are proceeding to Bundelkund *viâ* Bydanath, so that up to the latter place we can go together."

"Oh, we thank you heartily," was the reply, "The country

is so wild that it is very remarkable that, not knowing the route well, we have yet been able to keep on to it up to this time. We were in constant dread of going wrong."

The two brothers and the party of ten then started from Ashna, the former leading on the others unsuspectingly. A smart walk of two hours brought them to the brink of a *nullah* in the midst of of some jungle, so thickly interlaced as to be impervious to the mid-day sun.

"This is the nicest place to rest in under a broiling sun," observed Bhobanydeen. "We can sit awhile here by the *nullah*, and smoke till we are somewhat refreshed."

This was agreed to generally, and they all halted by the *nullah*, and disposed themselves comfortably, most of them with *chillum* in hand. The two brothers were soon busily smoking, when they simultaneously felt their necks grasped tightly with handkerchiefs, which is the usual Thug fashion for strangling. They endeavoured to scream out, but could not; but they struggled so much that the strangling did not kill them. The murderers thereupon drew out their knives and deliberately cut their throats.

"Hold! that will do," said the leader of the gang. "They are quiet enough now, and time is very precious to us. Strip them of their property, conceal the bodies in the jungle, and then bolt in different directions to meet at our next trysting-place."

This was done accordingly, the bodies being concealed in the jungle, and covered with sand and the boughs of trees. But neither of the two brothers was yet dead, and Chokilal, having first recovered his senses, was able to crawl out of the hiding-place, and began to move forward in search of assistance for Bhobanydeen. He had to go a few paces only to reach the village of Jurdiha, but it was, nevertheless, a weary distance for him. He did reach it, however, and was at once taken by the villagers to the thannah, where his wound was bound up, when he recovered sufficiently to relate what had occurred.

"These Thugs are very sharp," remarked the Daroga, "and I am afraid we are already too late for them. But we must hasten to the spot, if only to help the other man who is lying there."

They did go there with the greatest despatch, but the body of Bhowanydeen had been already removed, either by wild animals or the Thugs, and no trace of it was to be found.

"We can't do anything here," said the Daroga. "All we can do, in fact, is to send up Chokilal to the magistrate;" and all the Magistrate could do was to take down Chokilal's deposition. Chokilal grieved deeply for his brother, but nothing more was heard of him; the police plotted hard to get at the Thugs, but were unable to trace them.

Four years elapsed, and the circumstances of the case were almost entirely forgotten, when a Thug approver named Kashee Bux mentioned among other revelations that he had formed one of a party by which two travellers were inveigled at Ashna and killed, after which their property was carried off, while their bodies were hid in the jungle. "We returned to the spot two hours after, having left behind a part of our plunder in haste, and great was our surprise to find that neither of the two bodies were to be found in the place were we had hid them."

"Who were the principal actors in that affair?"

"Myself," said Kashee Bux, "and another Thug, named Nuffer Dome. We strangled the travellers first, and then cut their throats also, as the strangling did not seem to have killed them; and here is the very knife I used on the occasion."

The movements of the police were now quickened, and Nuffer Dome being captured, admitted his share in the crime, with this qualification; that he said he had only strangled one of the travellers, whose throat was afterwards cut either by Charan Das, or Shoobul Dome, two other Thugs of the party. In all material points, these confessions agreed with the deposition of Chokilal; but where was Chokilal now to be found?

"You shall not die a natural death, Chokilal, if you appear against us," was the mysterious warning conveyed to him by Charan Das and others. "Your brother is dead, and you cannot revive him; but you can save your own life from a second attack of the Thug knife, which you have felt before, by keeping perfectly quiet, and in hiding for a time." And Chokilal decided that, for the sake of his family at least, he ought not to be so rash as to brave these threats.

The police were unable to find Chokilal. He was not in his home at Bundelkund, and no one knew whither he had gone. Of Bhobanydeen, also, there was no certain news. No one had heard of him since the tragedy neat Jurdiha; no one knew whether he was dead or alive. There was, therefore, no proof forthcoming against any one but Nuffer Dome, who, on his own confession, was convicted of being an accomplice in strangling and wounding two travellers with intent to kill them, of having robbed them, and of being a professional Thug; for all which offences he was sentenced to transportation for life.

. . . . . .

"Did Chokilal ever turn up afterwards?"

"No; but a man named Bunwary lived with his family at Benares, and they say that he bore a very strong resemblance to Chokilal, except in the matter of whiskers, which Chokilal had never taken pains to cultivate as Bunwary did.

THE *MUNDUL* AND HIS BROKEN TEETH.

"WILL it be thus for ever? I cannot make the two ends meet. Why not go a-begging? As a Brahman I can surely do so unblamed."

Thus spoke Goroo Churu Bhuttacharge, an inhabitant of Shoom, in the district of Beerbhoom, a man with a large family, but slender means. Nor did he lose time over the idea that had occurred to him. He prepared to start on his expedition at once, though it was then the depth of winter; and his wife stared at him with astonishment when he appeared before her equipped for the journey.

"Don't be a goose, good man," said the wife. "You don't look like a beggar in the least, and no one will give alms to you."

"Not give alms to me, you silly girl? Why, how can any Sudra refuse alms to a Brahman when he asks for it? I have only to go round, and the *jhooly* (wallet) will become so full, that I fear lest I should not be able to bring it to you."

The wife shook her head doubtingly; but at last agreed to part with him for the children's sake. "If you must go, you had better be off at once," said she, "before the children come home; for very loathe will they be to let you go."

Gooroo Churu left home in the afternoon, and reached the village of Dhamoir a short time after sunset. He was here accosted as "a dear old friend," by a person who introduced himself by the name of Sonatun, but whom he did not remember to have ever seen; and he was necessarily looking very foolish, when the man abruptly asked him what had brought him out to that place.

"Oh! as to that, I am out on a begging expedition, to replenish my purse."

"Right, quite right, my friend; you have decided correctly in taking that step. Considering your position as a married man, and the father of many children, you could not do anything better than go a-begging. But why are you, then, on this route? This will carry you through several Mahomedan villages, where you cannot possibly earn anything. Come with me, and I shall take you to a Hindu village, where there will be no end to your gains."

Sonatun was shortly after joined by two other persons, who were addressed by him as Beng Nushoo and Cheng Nushoo; and they all professed the greatest friendship for the Brahman, whom they were equally anxious to befriend.

"You had better come with us," they said, "and we shall put you on the right track."

"No," said Gooroo Churu, "I won't accompany you. You

have increased from one to three in number, and I don't know any of you."

They all assured him that his fears were groundless; but the fears did exist, and Gooroo Churu refused to move. Sonatun thereupon took hold of his right hand, while Cheng carried his *jhooly*, and Beng gently pushed him from behind, and he was thus led on for about half-a-mile, into a jungle.

"Now, what is your will with me in this place? I see neither Hindu nor Mahomedan residents about me. Whom am I expected to beg from here?"

"You are still doubting us, Brahman; but don't do so. You can't find anyone anywhere to beg from in the night. This is a nice quiet place to rest in. Sleep here in perfect security, and in the morning we shall lead you to the Hindu village we spoke of."

They then made him sit down, after which, Sonatun brought some straw from the village, and spread it out on the ground for him to sleep upon; and Gooroo Churu, spreading out a *dhoti* on it, lay down on the mattrass improvised, and covered himself with a warm *dobur*.

The eyes of Gooroo Churu were closed; but he did not sleep, for his mind was full of fears. The three persons who had brought him to the spot were now joined by a fourth, and they walked about him alternately, frequently asking each other if he was asleep. They slept themselves, by turns, one being always on the watch; but finding that the Brahman would not sleep, they got up, while a fourth part of the night remained, and desired him to accompany them.

"If you want to rob me," said he, "you can do so here. I won't move from this place before daybreak."

"Doubt it not, holy man," said Cheng, "that we want what money you may have with you. I have seen money in his waistband, friends, and we had better take charge of it at once."

They now insisted on his getting up from the straw, and as he would not, Cheng seized him, and placed him on the back of Sunjub, the fourth man who had joined them, the Brahman being bound down, in that position, with his own cloths. They carried him, in this manner, to a *sursoo khet* (mustard field), and after binding his eyes, handled him rather roughly, till the money concealed in his waistband, amounting to Rs. 12/10, was forthcoming. They robbed him, also, of his spare clothing and appurtenances, including a *bánlinga* Mahádena, the god he worshipped, who was unable to help him. After that, they left him on the field to shift for himself.

"I must fly from this spot, at any rate, that they may not come after me again," muttered Gooroo Churu; and bestirring

himself, he was able to go a few paces in a westerly direction. He here came up to a tank, and washed himself, and then, not having slept a whole night, stretched himself out at the foot of a tree.

The sun had been up some hours when the Brahman awoke, and finding that he was near the village of Sookdebpore, he proceeded straight into it, to find out the village head man, and complain to him of what had occurred in the night.

"Will you tell me the way to the *mundul's* house?" asked he, of the first villager he met with.

The man appealed to was chary of words; but pointed out the dwelling with his long, shrivelled fingers. Gooroo Churu entered the house unannounced, and whom should he see in it but his "dear old friend" Sonatun, anointing himself with oil preparatory to bathing!

"Are you the *mundul* of this village?"

"Yes, I am; do you know me?"

"Of course I do: and I shall always recognise you by your broken teeth."

The Brahman left the *mundul's* house as quietly as he had entered it, and went straight to the thannah to lodge his complaint; and this led to the arrest of all the parties indicated by him. But the *thánnádár* and the *mundul* were friends, and the former refused to keep the latter in duress on the mere statement of an unknown complainant, unsupported by other evidence. Beng, Cheng, and Sunjub were brought to trial; but the first two had to be released, as there was no evidence against them to back up the Brahman's story. The only proof against Sunjub was, that a good part of the property plundered from the Brahman was found in his house. He was therefore convicted on strong presumption of having been concerned in the robbery, and was sentenced to five years' imprisonment.

Gooroo Churu never went a-begging again; but he succeeded in making a little money for his children by following the profession of an astrologer; and getting learned in his profession, he ventured to warn the *mundul* that the stars looked very red on his destiny.

SOUVENIRS OF THE SEA.

1870.

Across the bridge, along the quay,
  And down the oft-frequented pier,
  Till half-way down we stop to hear
The ripple of the silver sea.

A bench apart from all the rest
  Could tell a story often told;
  For here once more I seem to hold
A hand eight years ago I pressed.

It lay in mine as softly fell
  The summer twilight's creeping calm;
  The gentle hour breath'd forth a balm,
And held us with its mystic spell.

We said no word; but hand-to-hand
  In pressure spake more eloquent,
  And through the fingers language sent
That mutual lovers understand.

At length Aurora sigh'd and spake:
  "We may not hope some happy chance
  Will alter bitter circumstance;
Then here our farewell let us take."

We rose up while the shadows brown
  Came up and slept upon the sea;
  And, hand-in-hand, we silently
Pass'd to the dimly-lighted town.

And at her father's door we stopped;
  And there one parting wild embrace,
  While from her wan, despairing face
Some stealthy tears of anguish dropp'd.

Eight years ago! and can it be
  The same lone bench upon the pier;
  And that, around me still, I hear
The ripple of the self-same sea?

'Tis we who change. The seas remain
  Obedient to one ebb and flow;
  Nor, in their constant courses, know
Vicissitudes of joy and pain.

These plunging waves that round me roar,
  Have watched a thousand hearts like ours,
  Grow tender as the twilight lowers;
And will, perhaps, a thousand more.

But we who let our feelings range
  In wild caprice from year to year;
  And toy with hope and sport with fear—
We see them fix'd and deem it strange.

Yet something in the memory
  Of past romance will hold us still,
  And something of its ancient thrill
Will linger changeless, like the sea.

1878.

The past is gilded with a rim,
  To me, of pure, unsullied gold;
  Nor can I see one cloud to dim
The harmony of new and old.

The old had stolen from above,
  The first divine, ethereal gleam;
  The new is consummated love;
The fair fruition of the dream.

Yet she who bears the name of wife,
  And who beside me lately stood
  To watch the billows' rising strife,
And see the sun descend in blood,

Is not the sorrow-stricken form
  Who sat in twilight on the pier;
  But those white lightnings of the storm
Played round a being doubly dear.

Oh, sea, that saw both old and new
  Take root in lovely natural laws,
  Give each its smiling rainbow hue,
And consecrate what is and was!

Matthew Seton.

HORACE:

A NOVEL.

BY MATTHEW SETON,

Author of "Sidera," "The Love of Lennox," etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRADLE.

"First the babe,
Mewling and puking in its nurse's arms."
As you Like It.

Sir Harold Winn sat toasting his toes before a huge fire in the library. It was Christmas Eve; the hour was about four o'clock, and as Sir Harold had not yet rung for the lamp, he sat in the twilight. The big flames, as they mounted up the chimney, created an expression on his face of high good-humour, and every now and then he would rub his hands up and down his knees with a chuckle to himself, which implied much gratification of some kind. At the same time, whenever the slightest sound outside the room attracted his attention, he turned round eagerly towards the door with a manifest look of anxiety and expectancy. Presently, his toes being sufficiently toasted, he rose from his chair and began to parade up and down the room, stopping occasionally to give himself a hearty slap on the thigh, and repeat, with a chuckle, the exclamation: "Gad! to think of it! Is it possible?" It is not for a moment to be assumed that, because of these singular demonstrations, the baronet was in the least degree of unsound mind. Sir Harold at this period was in ample possession of the *mens sana in corpore sano;* and, so far as was known, he had never been without that unspeakable advantage. He was a man of middle age, of middle height, and of military carriage; he was, indeed, a colonel in the British army. He had been through the Crimean campaigns, serving as aide-de-camp to Lord Raglan, and afterwards in the same capacity to that unfortunate commander's successors. He could tell of fearful battles, and of "hair-breadth 'scapes i' the imminent deadly breach." He had seen the Alma forded, and its heights stormed; he had been present at the heroic struggle of the Guards at Inkermann, and had lost an arm in the act of delivering a message to Sir George Cathcart, just before that hero received his mortal wound. He had then been sent home to England with despatches. Sir Harold possessed a countenance of the best

military type; aquiline in form, and with every feature in pleasing proportion. Everyone was especially attracted by the sagacious and kindly grey eyes peeping from under thick and rugged brows. The hair on his face consisted merely of a short patch of crisp whisker on either cheek.

Sir Harold had again chuckled, again slapped his thigh, and once more exclaimed, "Gad! is it possible?" when the door was opened, and a venerable female domestic presented herself before him. "You may come, Sir Harold," she said, touching him on the loose sleeve of his lost arm. "It's all right, and her ladyship is doing beautiful."

"Ha!" cried Sir Harold, cutting a caper in his glee. "You don't mean to say it's all over? But what is it, Mrs. Plumtree —what is it?"

"What is it, Sir Harold? Why, a boy, to be sure. What else did you think it could be?"

"I thought, perhaps, it might be a girl," said the baronet humbly. "It sometimes is, is it not?"

"*Never!*" said the housekeeper with emphasis. "Never was such a thing known in the Winn family as a girl for the first; any way since *I*'ve been connected with the house, and that's as you know, Sir Harold, since your grandfather's time. The first-born *always* ran in the male line."

"And the longer they keep that course the better," said Sir Harold, nearly capering over an arm-chair. "Ha, ha! So it's a boy? Is it possible?"

"It's the finest one I ever beheld in the whole course of my life, and that's saying a good deal, considering the many I've had in my arms," said Mrs. Plumtree. "He beats you out-and-out in point of bulk, Sir Harold. You *were* a mite of a thing when you came into the world. You may remember I was the first that had you in my arms."

"No, I don't, Plumtree. I can't say that my recollection extends so far back," said Sir Harold, laughing; "but I believe every word you say, and I hope since that time I have *grown* on your acquaintance. Now, let us go and see the little chap."

"You must be very quiet, Sir Harold," said Mrs. Plumtree, as she preceded him along the corridor. "Step as still as a mouse; my lady or the infant may have fallen asleep; p'raps both."

Sir Harold followed in ecstasies of delight, muttering to himself, "Can it be possible? I'm the luckiest devil alive."

They entered a large bedroom, in the handsomely-curtained bed of which lay a lady of delicate loveliness, who looked about twenty-eight years of age. Her eyes were wide open, and the sweetest smile imaginable broke on her mouth as she saw her husband ap-

proach. That gentleman crept up to the bedside on tip-toe, and pressed his lips to those of his wife as he whispered, "My precious Evelyn, how are you? and—and—oh! where is he?"

"Look," whispered his wife, turning her eyes on a pink-looking ball which lay cuddled up in her bosom, "Isn't he lovely?"

"Is *that* him?" said Sir Harold, gazing intently on the little roll of humanity. "Dear me! I could never have believed it. Isn't he very small?"

"*Small*, Sir Harold!" cried Mrs. Plumtree. "Excuse me, sir, but I don't think you know what you are talking about. He's the finest babe of his age I ever set eyes on—in the Winn family, or any other either."

"But, Mrs. Plumtree, he isn't aged yet, you may say."

"Begging your pardon, Sir Harold, not a minute under a full hour. You should have seen yourself, Sir Harold. He's twice the size *you* were under a like predicament."

"I'm delighted to hear it," said the baronet; "and, of course, you know best about these things, Mrs. Plumtree. He certainly is a very fine-looking fellow," he continued, putting his glasses to his eye for a more minute inspection. "A brave-looking little fellow as it is possible to see. So admirably formed, too—eh, Evelyn?"

"Darling, he's simply perfect," whispered his wife, throwing a beautiful white arm round her husband's neck as he bent down to speak to her.

"And you, dearest; how do you feel?"

"My darling, I couldn't feel happier. Of course I am a little weak just now, but that is to be expected."

"How do you consider Lady Winn is progressing, doctor," whispered Sir Harold to that gentleman, who was in the room.

"Admirably, Sir Harold; but you musn't talk to her too much. She is doing famously.

"And the little fellow?"

"Equally well. Never brought a more creditable infant into the world in my life. He's got a biceps already."

"And a pair of lungs, too, it seems," added Sir Harold, as at this moment the hope of the Winns awoke from his primal slumber with a vigorous squall.

"Dear me, what's the matter?" said his father.

"A capital sign," said the doctor. "Shows he's got plenty of lung play."

"He isn't ill?" asked Sir Harold, anxiously.

"No, Sir Harold, only desperately hungry; as well he may be," said Mrs. Plumtree shortly.

"*Hungry!*" exclaimed the baronet. "What! already?"

"Why, to be sure, Sir Harold. Do you suppose he can live without eating, any more than yourself?"

"Bless his little stomach!" remarked the nurse, who was assisting the new-born to get into a proper position for drawing the natural nutriment from his mother's breast.

"Ah! to be sure! I had forgotten," said Sir Harold. "His appetite seems good—eh, Mrs. Plumtree?"

"First-rate, Sir Harold. He takes his food as nimbly as a sucking calf.

"Bless his little mouth!" observed the nurse.

"Well, *now*, what's the matter?" said the baronet, as, the meal being accomplished, a second squall resounded through the room. "Is he dissatisfied or annoyed, or what?"

"He only wants to be rocked a-bit; isn't that it, my sweet little beauty? Hush — sha — sha; tuc, tuc, tuc," said Mrs. Plumptree, as she lifted the young gentleman from the bed and placed him in the arms of the nurse.

"Bless his little 'eart!" remarked that person, dandling her charge backwards and forwards.

"Don't you think, Mrs. Plumtree, I might be allowed to hold him in my arms for a few seconds?" asked Sir Harold, with great deference.

"Did you ever nurse a baby before, Sir Harold?" said the housekeeper.

"I can't say I have, Mrs. Plumtree; but I will be most careful, I assure you. Recollect, it is my own offspring."

"Jenks, give Sir Harold the baby," said Mrs. Plumtree, authoritatively. Jenks placed the infant carefully in the baronet's hands, who dandled it with great gravity for some moments in imitation of the nurse and Mrs. Plumtree. The son, however, did not seem entirely to appreciate the fostering of the father, and proclaimed his uneasiness by pulling fearful faces and uttering a terrific yell.

"Good gracious, Mrs. Plumtree!" cried the baronet, hastily returning the babe to the arms of Jenks; "what is the matter with the child do you suppose? He seems to have taken a violent dislike to me. I do sincerely trust that it will not continue."

"You're not used to a babe, Sir Harold—that's it," said Mrs. Plumtree smiling. "They're a very delicate kind of furniture. There's a knack in nursing as well as in most things, but it's a knack you've yet to learn, Sir Harold."

"No doubt, Mrs. Plumtree. All I hope is he wont take a permanent antipathy to me; that, I think, would really break my heart."

"Bless his sweet little body from top to bottom," observed

Jenks, as she resumed the dandling process. "Mrs. Plumtree, do look at his precious toes; for all the world like pieces of carved wax-work."

"Upon my soul, so they are," said Sir Harold, surveying the toes through his glasses. "Just like wax: most beautiful. What exquisite formation! I had no idea that an infant so young could be so complete."

"Sir Harold," said the doctor, "I must turn you out. My patient ought to have some sleep, and you talk a great deal too much; in fact, you have been here quite long enough."

"Certainly doctor, certainly. I wouldn't stay a moment longer on any account," said the baronet, bending over his wife and giving her a parting kiss. "Sleep long and well, dearest," he whispered, "and if you dream at all, dream of *our* sweet boy there."

"My Christmas present to you, Harold," smiled his wife.

"Ah! that's his cradle, I suppose, Mrs. Plumtree?" said the baronet, pointing to an article of the kind standing near the bed.

His *bassinet*, Sir Harold," said the housekeeper with dignity. "It only came home last night, but I consider it a marvel of workmanship."

"So it is, so it is," said Sir Harold. "Doctor," he whispered, as he was leaving the room, "to think of it! Is it possible? A son and heir! Ha! ha!"

"Yes," muttered the doctor, as the door closed, "and heir to something worth being heir to, which isn't always the case."

CHAPTER II.

LOVE AT SIGHT, AND A COUPLE OF TELEGRAMS.

"Such a one do I remember, whom to look at was to love."
Locksley Hall.

Sir Harold Winn had been presented by his wife with a son and heir, and the doctor had correctly remarked that he really was heir to something. Dr. Roebuck knew very well that, if the young gentleman who had just made his appearance in this "breathing world" only lived long enough, he would succeed to the paternal estate of Wintoun, the rent-roll of which was a full fifteen thousand a year. This, surely, was being born with a silver spoon in one's mouth; rather, let us say, a gold one. The Winn's were an ancient Warwickshire family; so ancient, indeed, that Sir Bernard Burke himself quite failed to get at their origin; for, after tracing them to the Roman invasion and establishing a relationship between them and Caractacus, he seemed to lose himself in the mists of antiquity, aud gave up all further research.

The origin, therefore, of the family of Winn remained as great a problem as the source of the Nile, the fate of Sir John Franklin, or the whereabouts of the lost Ten Tribes. The present head of the family had remained a bachelor until he was a little past forty, and, to all appearance, he had meant to linger in the same state until he should have doubled that age, which everybody, and especially Mrs. Plumtree, declared was a monstrous pity.

"Oh, Sir Harold, if you would only take a wife before it is too late," remonstrated that excellent woman, now verging on the venerable age of forescore and ten. "To think that the title and estates which have descended direct from father to son without fail these seven hundred years should go to a nephew! I did hope that these old eyes of mine would behold a son of your own, Sir Harold, before I was called away. I could say then, with a thankful heart, 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'" And here the faithful servitor gave her aged eyes a wipe with her apron.

"But, Mrs. Plumtree," said Sir Harold, "what can I do? I have not yet met any lady who has taken my fancy sufficiently to make me wish to marry her; and you surely wouldn't wish to see a mistress in Wintoun Manor between whom and myself there subsisted no real affection?"

"Good gracious no, Sir Harold! Heaven forbid any such thing! Whatever you do, Sir Harold (if I may be so bold as to give a piece of advice), marry for love, and love only; and be sure you are loved in return. If there's not *that*, there's mostly nothing but worrit and heartburnings. I've seen something of it in my time. But surely, Sir Harold, it cannot be so difficult for one like you to find a lady after your own heart. Look at what you are, Sir Harold; a baronet descended all the way from one of the Norman Conquerors, and a colonel in the army, having fought in the Crimean, besides losing a harm. Then, Sir Harold, you have handsome looks, and fine estates, and a mint of money coming in every year, besides having the warmest heart in all the country round. What more could any lady desire? Ah! Sir Harold, if you could only find some one to charm you at one of them balls, or dinner-parties you go to when in London, how happy it would make my old heart! Well, well, well!"

Sir Harold shook his head and smiled.

"I don't know, Mrs. Plumtree; I fear my heart is not made of very impressible material, and, no doubt, the older I get the harder *it* gets."

"Ah, Sir Harold, that reminds me of the old hymn:

"Oh! for a glance of 'eavenly ray
To melt this stony 'eart away!"

"Well, Mrs. Plumtree—who knows?—perhaps this very season the stony heart may melt, and I may get caught."

And, as it turned out, that very season Sir Harold *did* get caught.

"By Jove! and on my forty-first birthday, of all things! What do you say to that, my boy?" he remarked to a brother officer, in announcing his engagement to the beautiful and Honourable Miss Thurso. It was the height of the London season, in the year Sir Harold returned from the Crimea, and he celebrated his forty-first anniversary by dining with his old friend, Sir Roger Bramwell, who gave a party in his honour; and afterwards by attending a ball at the house of the Countess of Rumford. Of course, Sir Harold had been to many dinner-parties, and had danced at many balls before; and it need scarcely be said that he was regarded by many mothers as one of the most desirable articles in the matrimonial market. Many a young bosom had heaved with hope on being presented to the Crimean hero, with his handsome face, medal-bespangled breast, wide-spread acres, and armless sleeve. The latter, far from being any drawback, had invested him with a more romantic charm. Might not the happy possessor of the baronet reply to any sceptic, "If you doubt my husband's heroism, look at his arm! Look at his empty sleeve!" Sir Harold hitherto had steered an unbroken course amid these brilliant planets of love; but at Lady Rumford's ball, he at length met the bright particular star whose lustre he could not withstand. He danced with Miss Thurso, and she shone on him with rays so transcendent, that he closed with her that very evening. Three months afterwards they were married; an event which unquestionably gave a new lease to Mrs. Plumtree's faithful life. On both sides it was an alliance of pure affection. There are some who say that there is no such thing as love at first sight,—they are wrong; it is more common than people think; and its results are often of the happiest description. It was so in the case of Harold Winn and Evelyn Thurso. When they were presented to each other their eyes met, and mutual passion was the consequence. Instinctively they took to each other, just as we may suppose their progenitors Adam and Eve did, when the former awoke from his sound sleep and found himself in the unwonted presence of a woman. During the first waltz they felt more than they spoke, but what words they exchanged were sufficient to convince them that they were certainly born for each other. In the second dance they conversed more, and found that the views and sentiments of the one were merely the reflex of those of the other. Towards the end of the evening he proposed and she accepted. Evelyn's parents, Lord and Lady Clackmannan, though considerably surprised at the sudden march

of events, were perfectly satisfied. They expressed themselves immensely gratified that their daughter had found a man whom she seemed to love so devotedly; had it been love in a cottage their satisfaction might not, perhaps, have been so lively. At this time Miss Thurso had reached her twenty-sixth year, and was in the full charm of a loveliness essentially refined and patrician. The regularity of her features, the dazzling whiteness of her skin, and the extreme grace of her figure, were all remarkable; but, perhaps, the most winning thing about her was the striking melody of her voice. Like Cordelia's, this was "ever low, gentle, and sweet; an excellent thing in woman." Once married, Sir Harold's constant dream was of a son. His wife was equally eager on this point. But Providence saw fit to delay the realisation of these highly natural hopes: and not until the end of the second year of their union did the blessed consummation arrive.

When Sir Harold left the bed-room he returned to the library and wrote off a telegram to his father-in-law, Lord Clackmannan, who was then in Scotland. It ran as follows:—"Winn, Wintoun Manor, Warwickshire, to Clackmannan, Cockenzie Castle, Aberdeenshire.—Evelyn safely delivered this afternoon of a magnificent boy. Mother and son both doing well. Merry Christmas." Then he wrote one to his only brother, Edmund, who, up to that moment, had been heir-apparent to the Wintoun estates. "Winn, Wintoun Manor, Warwickshire, to Winn, 39, Dover Street, Piccadilly, London.—Son and heir this afternoon. Evelyn and child both doing well. Merry Christmas." These telegrams he at once despatched by a groom to Netherbrook, a little country town three miles distant, to be forwarded to their destinations. The receipt of the first filled Cockenzie Castle with rejoicing. "My dear," said Lord Clackmannan, handing the telegram to his wife, "here's famous Christmas news for you! Winn has a son and heir at last. He'll be beside himself with joy."

"You don't mean it?" cried her ladyship, seizing the telegram and popping on her spectacles. "Poor, dear Evelyn! what a happy Christmas it will be to her! But how suddenly it has come at last! They assured me I should be in time if I started for England next week."

"Those events always come on you like a thunderbolt," observed his lordship sententiously. "I never knew a man yet who longed for an heir, but the little animal appeared when he was least expected, and set everybody in a flurry."

"All's well that end's well, at any rate," said his wife; "and this seems to have been the case with Evelyn. I must write to her at once, and ask whether she wishes to have me, after all."

"And I will send a telegram of congratulation to Winn," said

Lord Clackmannan, as he took a pen and dashed off the following:—"We are delighted, and send warmest congratulations. Our best love to Evelyn."

Perhaps the telegram to Dover Street scarcely afforded such unqualified satisfaction. Edmund Winn was about five years younger than his brother, and had married the moment he came of age. He possessed at this time one son and four daughters. The former was just twenty, and before his uncle took it into his head to marry, he had been looked upon for a long time as that gentleman's ultimate and certain successor, for everybody believed that Sir Harold was a confirmed bachelor. Edmund had a brotherly affection for Harold, but at the same time he may not have regarded the latter's sudden marriage with unmixed delight. His wife, at any rate, was much disgusted; for though an extreme Evangelical and professing to abjure the world, the desire of her heart was to see her son Grantley, the lord of Wintoun. As for that young gentleman, his rage knew no bounds, and he denounced his uncle in sufficiently racy language. But as time went on, and Sir Harold's union seemed destined to bear no fruit, the heir-presumptive's hopes revived; and being already a practised spendthrift, in spite of an adequate allowance, he often solaced himself amid his pecuniary embarrassments with the prospects of a baronetcy and fifteen thousand a-year. When it became certain that Lady Winn was in what is called "an interesting condition," Mr. Grantley cursed with renewed vigour, but still clung to the hope that "the little beggar" might be a girl.

This was the nephew whose probable succession to Wintoun had filled Mrs. Plumtree's heart with sadness. She had heard of Master Grantley's "racketty ways," she said, and of something more besides; and she declared that if such a scapegrace inherited Wintoun he would bring everything to wrack and ruin, and end by going to the d——. When Sir Harold's telegram arrived, Grantley was seated at dinner with his parents and his two elder sisters, Maria and Harriet.

"Humph," said Mr. Winn; "so Harold's got his boy at last."

"What! you don't mean to say that Evelyn has been confined?" cried Mrs. Winn.

"Read for yourself," said her husband, tossing the telegram to her.

The lady read it with nervous anxiety, and her colour visibly heightened.

"Extraordinary!" she exclaimed. "Why, it was not expected or a week; and—a boy!"

"Let me look, mother," said Grantley, snatching the paper from her hand.

"Mamma, has aunt Evelyn really got a little boy?" said Maria.

"Yes, my dear, she has," said Mrs. Winn shortly.

"Oh! what fun!" cried Harriet. "Maria, you and I have actually got a first cousin. Perhaps you'll be his godmother."

"How delighted Uncle Harold will be!" said Maria.

"D——the little brute!" muttered Grantley, flinging the telegram on to the table. "I wish the beast would choke."

"What's the matter, Grantley?" said his father. "You don't seem pleased at the news."

"I should like to know who would be, when it's news that tells you you're cut out of such splendid prospects," said the young gentleman.

"You should not have indulged in them so much," said his father. "Who told you you were so certain to outlive your uncle and myself? I can't say the life you often lead is particularly condusive to longevity. If I were you, I would set to and manufacture a fortune for myself, and then you would be independent of all unseasonable births and marriages. It's not too late to begin."

"Damn your preaching," muttered Grantley, stung by his father's sarcastic tone. "Fill up my glass, Bloxum," he roared to the butler. "D——it all!"

"Grantley, dear, don't swear—it horrifies me," whispered his mother.

"It's enough to make a parson swear."

"Hush!" said his mother, shuddering. "Remember how fearful will be the portion of those who use such language."

"You can't be glad at what has happened?" said the young man.

"We must recollect that a *Higher* than we has the ordering of these things," said the mother submissively, while she bit her lips to hide her vexation.

"I wonder what they will call him!" said Harriet. "Fancy, if you are godmother, Maria."

"Do you think we shall be asked to the christening?" said Maria.

"It is impossible to say, my dear. It may depend upon the state of your dear aunt's health. I fear she is not very strong."

"I hope the frost will kill her," thought Grantley to himself.

"If you are ready, girls, we will go to the drawing-room," said Mrs. Winn, looking at her daughters.

"You are going to write to Evelyn, I suppose," said her husband, as they were leaving the room.

"I will do so to-morrow, please God; but dearest Evelyn, I

am sure, would excuse me to-night if she knew what a frightful headache I am suffering from."

"I will telegraph to Harold, at any rate. He may think it odd if I don't," said Mr. Winn; and he sent the following message: "Glad you've got your wish at last. Emily congratulates, but has a terrible headache."

CHAPTER III.

"What's in a name?"

Romeo and Juliet.

A SMALL CURTAIN CONFERENCE.

SIR HAROLD WINN read his telegrams by the bedside of his wife.

"Dear mamma, how surprised she must have been," said Lady Winn, smiling. "I wonder if she will come, after all. I shall have a letter from her, no doubt."

"Edmund is curt enough, I think," said Sir Harold; "and it strikes me he might have expressed himself a little more cordially. 'Glad you've got your wish at last!' What a way of wishing a man joy of a thing which he knows his heart has been set on for the last four years? 'Emily congratulates, but has a violent headache.' Well, I'm sorry the news has had such a bad effect on her, poor dear lady."

"I can't say I am much surprised," said Evelyn, with a suggestive smile.

"I don't think that cub, Grantley, will much relish his cousin," said Sir Harold. "What a fury he was in at my marriage, to be sure! Gad! he would scarcely speak to me."

"The girls will be delighted," said Lady Winn. "Shall we ask them down for the christening, Harold?"

"To be sure, my love, and any one else you may fancy. We'll have a house full of people. We'll make his christening worthy of the occasion, we will," continued the baronet, gazing tenderly at his first-born. "That reminds me, my dear, that just now we have to call him *he*. The next thing to do is to fix upon a name What shall it be, love?"

"What do you think, dear?" said his wife. At this moment the heir awoke, and began to express his feelings in the usual and only way.

"Ha!" said the baronet, "it's clear he wants another meal. never saw anything like it. Always at it! Well, well, Mrs. Plumtree assures me it's quite natural, and a capital sign; so does ck."

"Of course it is," said his wife, laughing and blushing. "You goose!"

"Upon my word, Evelyn, you seem quite—quite—what do you call it?—'native, and to the manner born,'" said Sir arHold, looking admiringly at his wife as she took the child in her arms. "Well, I'll be off, and we'll see about the name another day."

The important matter of finding a name for the first-born was not reverted to on another day; but what amounted to much the same thing, it was on another night. About six weeks after the interesting event had taken place, Sir Harold and his wife were reposing comfortably beneath the blankets, when the former awoke, and, hearing his spouse give a slight cough, he whispered softly: "Are you awake, my love?"

"Yes, dear; I have been awake quite five minutes."

"Do you feel sleepy just now? I mean, as if you would fall asleep again immediately?"

"On the contrary, dear. I feel rather wakeful."

"I am glad to hear it," said Sir Harold, for I feel quite the same myself, and I want to talk to you about naming the boy. It is quite time we should fix upon a name of some sort, for it only wants a couple of weeks to his baptism."

"I agree with you, dear," said Lady Winn, "and have only been waiting till you mentioned the subject."

"Well, suggest something," said Sir Harold.

"What do you say to your father's name, Christopher?"

"Never!" said Sir Harold, promptly. "No man could have a greater respect and affection for his father than I had; but no consideration on earth could induce me to give my boy his name. Christopher! Christopher! I positively abhor the name!"

"Well, what do you say to your own?" said his wife, laughing "I am sure you can't think 'Harold' very bad. It is genuine Saxon, and belonged to a most heroic Saxon monarch, and sounds, to *me* at least, excessively pretty."

"Association, my dear! association! Isn't that it, eh?" said the baronet, giving his wife a playful poke in the ribs with his elbow. "Love me, love my name, eh?"

"A little, perhaps," laughed his wife. "But don't be vain, for I assure you I liked the name for its own sake long before I knew you. I don't think I know any one prettier for a man."

"As to that, I like the name well enough myself," said Sir Harold.

"Then have it, dear."

"Well, you see, I have a strong prejudice against an eldest son being called after his father, and so making the head of the family bear the same name for two generations successively. In my own

family I don't think there is a precedent for such a thing. Besides, when father and son are named alike it generally makes a lot of confusion."

"Then, what do you say to *my* father's name—Alexander?" said Lady Winn.

"Oh, horrible, atrocious!" cried Sir Harold." "My love, you musn't feel offended; but with all respect to your father, I am bound to say that I think Alexander one of the most odious and detestable names in existence. Then, look at the horrid abbreviations. Our boy would be sure to be called Aleck; and, worse still, if he went on a visit to Cockenzie—which he is sure to do very often as soon an he is old enough to pepper grouse—he would inevitably come back recognising no call but *Sandy! Sandy!* Good God! Just think of such an appellation being applied to a son of mine; and "Sandy! Sandy!" echoing all over the place, suggesting some red-haired pawky Scotch herd-boy! No, no, my dear, Alexander is doomed; Alexander will never do."

"By all means, dearest," said his wife, laughing. "I confess I am not the least in love with 'Alexander' myself. Suppose we call the little one—Hush! is that him crying? No; I think it was only a cat outside—suppose we call him after your brother."

"Edmund?" cried the baronet. "I have no objection personally to the name as a name, but I don't think it would do to give it to our *first*, my love. 'Edmund' will keep very well for a second or third, if we have them. Besides, Emily might take to fancying we wanted to pay *her* some indirect compliment; the last thing in the world *I* have any wish to do."

"Poor Emily!" laughed his wife.

"Come, my dear, try again," said Sir Harold.

"I think we have pretty well exhausted the names of male relatives," said Lady Winn.

"Oh, never mind relatives," said the baronet. "I have no superstitions in the matter; and if anybody is likely to be touchy on the score of civility, we can, perhaps, manage to gratify them in the second names. Now, then, suggest."

"What do you think of Charles."

"Charles'—'Charley.' Yes, I like 'Charles' uncommonly; and 'Charley' is my darling; but the worst of it is my valet is called 'Charles.' So I don't think 'Charles' will do."

"Henry," suggested Lady Winn.

"There, again, I'm tremendously fond of 'Henry;' but unfortunately the stable-boy is 'Harry.' 'Henry' must be declined with thanks."

"Alfred?"

"Don't care about it, somehow. Too grandified and monarchical, or else too tame; I don't know exactly which."

"Arthur?"

"Pretty—uncommonly pretty! and always associated with our immortal Duke; but it isn't quite the thing."

"Hugh; Hubert?"

"Ah! both charming, I must confess, especially the last. But 'Hugh'—let me see; how would 'Hugh Winn' sound, or by and bye 'Sir Hugh Winn?" Hardly euphonious. 'Hubert' would be better; and, Gad! now I think of it, I have an ancestor 'Hubert,' the very devil of a warrior, who fought at Cressy, and unhorsed, goodness knows how many Frenchmen, besides smashing countless battle-axes."

"Then let it be, 'Hubert,'" said his wife. "We shall be mutually pleased, for it was always an immense favourite of mine."

"'Hubert,'—'Hubert Winn,'—'Sir Hubert Winn,'" repeated Sir Harold to himself several times. "Not bad, at all—charming, in fact; but——"

"But what?" asked his wife, much amused. "Another objection?"

"Yes; and a very strong one; in fact, an irresistible one. You forgot that 'Hubert' is the real name of the head keeper, though they call him 'Hugh' for brevity's sake. I can't imagine, for the life of me, how these people get hold of such names. It's really too absurd! Fancy a fellow like Leatherhead being dubbed by such a chivalrous and patrician name as 'Hubert!'"

"Does it signify so very much, after all, dearest?" asked Lady Winn. "We like the name. Surely that is the important point?"

"My love, it will never do. The boy will be going out with Leatherhead as soon as he can handle a gun, and they will take to calling him 'Master Hughie' and so forth; and the under-keepers and stablemen will always have in their heads the association with Leatherhead's name, and may get into the habit, you know, of treating him with undue familiarity. No; 'Hubert' won't do. With deep regret we must part from 'Hubert.' Now, dear, let's have another."

"Dearest, to tell you the truth, I feel quite at the end of my tether," said Lady Winn, laughing. "Suppose you suggest some name yourself."

"Ah! all right," said the baronet, cheerfully. "I've been thinking a great deal of 'Horace;' in fact, I was actually dreaming of 'Horace' when I awoke. My love, what do you say to 'Horace?'"

"Capital!" said his wife. "As pretty a name as it is possible to choose, in my opinion. Classical, too, is it not?"

"Yes, decidedly; but it was not exactly the beloved Venusian who was running in my head when I thought of it."

"Ah?" said his wife, "you have some association with the name, then?"

"Yes, and a very powerful one. I will tell you. When I was in the Guards, before I got on Raglan's staff, I had a great chum in the same regiment called Horace Chetwynd. A better man never lived, and no two friends could be more devoted to one another than he and I. Of course he went to the Crimea as well as myself. Well, just after I had seen poor Cathcart fall in that hot affair at Inkermann, and had received the Russian message of civility in my arm, I heard a deep groan beside me, and getting off my horse, who should I find lying on his back with a bullet through his lungs, but Horace; I knelt down beside him and spoke to him. He opened his eyes, recognised me, smiled, and whispered, 'God bless you, old fellow! Don't forget me; be a friend to Algy.' The next moment he shut his eyes, gave one sigh, and was gone. Well, I can't help having a feeling that I should like to have our first boy's name associated in some way with that noble fellow. There is nothing against the name itself, for we both admire it, and—and—you have no idea what a friend poor Chetwynd was to me." Here, the excellent baronet, finding that he had not taken a handkerchief to bed with him, applied a corner of the counterpane to his eyes, and removed some tributary drops. "What do you think, Evelyn?" he said, when his emotion had subsided.

"I think you are the very dearest and most affectionate of men," said his wife, turning round to kiss him; "and I think our darling must be named 'Horace' or nothing."

"Then we may look upon that as settled," said Sir Harold.

"But, my dear, we must not seem to slight your family in any way—and people get touchy on these points, I know;—so what do you say to giving him your maiden name in addition, and calling him, 'Horace Thurio Winn?"

"By all means," said his wife. "Nothing could be better or prettier. I will tell mamma to-morrow. My little Horace! May all the angels of God watch over him!"

"Are you getting sleepy, Evelyn?" asked her husband.

"Very," said Lady Winn, with a yawn. "Are you, dear?"

"Awfully," yawned the baronet in response. "I think we'd —that is—ah!—(*yawn*)—yes, I think we'd—(*yawn*)—we'd better go to sleep."

"So—so—(*yawn*)—so do I," murmured his wife. And they did.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. PLUMTREE VISITS MRS. MARROWFAT.

"Nor, Grandeur, hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor."

Gray.

MRS. PLUMTREE possessed an old friend and crony in the person of Mrs. Marrowfat, who resided at the north lodge of the park with her married daughter, who kept the lodge. In former years Mrs. Marrowfat had herself been keeper of the lodge, but she was now so old that it would have been impossible for her to run out to open the gate for every equestrian and carriage that demanded admittance. So she had been succeeded by her daughter, Mrs. Wren; while, at the same time, she was allowed to spend the remainder of her days in the lodge on a comfortable pension. Mrs. Marrowfat was nearly as old as Mrs. Plumtree, but physically much her inferior; for, while the venerable housekeeper could still walk a mile or two with the greatest ease, Mrs. Marrowfat could only bobble about indoors under the tyranny of rheumatism, or gout, or lumbago, all of which complaints seemed to visit her in turn with the utmost regularity. Mrs. Plumtree and Mrs. Marrowfat had both entered the Winn family about the same time—that is to say, more than sixty years since, when both were young and comely virgins; and, having then struck up a friendship, they had remained friends down to the present period. Both were, in the length of their services and the devotion of their duty, admirable representatives of that class of ancient retainers which it is to be feared is rapidly dying out. They differed from each other in this, that whereas Mrs. Marrowfat had married and seen children and grandchildren rise up before her, Mrs. Plumtree had grown, had lived, and would certainly die in "single blessedness." The snow, which for some weeks after Christmas had lain thick upon the grounds of Wintoun, had quite disappeared, and given place to early snowdrops and crocuses; so one day, shortly before the christening of the son and heir, Mrs. Plumtree put on her bonnet and shawl and goloshes, and dropped in, as her custom was, to have a chat and a cup of tea with Mrs. Marrowfat. Mrs. Marrowfat was sitting in a big arm-chair before the fire, in a kind of intermittent doze; her daughter, Mrs. Wren, was knitting by the window, whence she could overlook the lodge-gate; and a girl, who looked about eighteen or nineteen, was rocking a cradle, in which reposed a sleeping infant.

"Ah, Mary, is that you?" croaked Mrs. Marrowfat, as Mrs.

Plumtree entered. "I thought I was never going to see you again. What's become of you this long time?"

"Well, you see, Jane, what with the birth of Sir Harold's son—the Lord be thanked for the blessed occurrence!—and the snow lying so deep, I've hardly found it possible to creep so far, else, you may rely upon it, I'd have been here before. But how are ye, Jane, this long time?"

"Only middlin', Mary, only middlin'. I've had another crue bout of the rheumatics since I saw you last; and, in fact, I can't hobble across the room now without help. It won't be long now before I get to kingdom come—it won't be long. Well, well, my old man's been there nigh twenty years, and I shan't be sorry to see him, I can tell you."

"You'll take a seat, Mrs. Plumtree? You're not going home just this minute, I hope?" said Mrs. Wren, bringing a chair up to the fire. "I'll lay the cloth this minute. Mother has been fretting after you, you can't believe."

"Cheer up, old lady," said Mrs. Plumtree, patting her old crony affectionately on the back. "You mustn't think of kingdom come yet a-bit, for I've hardly began to think of setting my own house in order, and we made up our minds to try and get there pretty much about the same time, if you remember.—And how are *you* getting on, Patty, and how's the baby?" she continued, turning to the girl at the cradle.

"Pretty well, ma'am, thank you," whispered the girl blushing scarlet, and hanging down her eyes in evidently a painful confusion.

"Come, Patty," said Mrs. Wren, "you needn't look so troubled and shame-faced before Mrs. Plumtree. You know you can trust her, if anybody, and I'm sure she's always been a good friend to you; if not she, who else, I should like to know?"

"That you may, my girl," said the good housekeeper, heartily. "You'll never want for a friend so long as I can help you. It's not me that'll ever throw the thing in your teeth, you may depend. There, there; now don't be down-hearted," she continued, as the girl began wiping her eyes with her apron.

"I'm sure I feel grateful to you, Mrs. Plumtree," sobbed Patty.

"I told her how it would be, often and often," said Patty's grandmother, shaking her head. "There's only one outcome to them that commit such follies, and that's bitterness and tears."

"Come, come, Jane," said Mrs. Plumtree; "you musn't be hard on the girl. I'm sure she must have suffered enough as it is, and this is not the time for lectures and reproaches. What the girl wants is cheer-up and comforting. She's as thin as a rail."

"She does take on so, poor girl; you'd never believe," whispered Patty's mother.

"Well, Jane," said Mrs. Plumtree, opening a basket she had brought with her, "you see it's not always a true saying, 'Out of sight out of mind,' for I have not forgotten you. There, what do you think of that article of worsted work? Will it keep your old bones from aching a degree less, do you think? I worked it every stitch myself, and it's not everybody that could boast the like at my age, I take leave to say."

"Ah, you were always mindful of a body, Mary," said Mrs. Marrowfat, taking the little shawl from Mrs. Plumtree. "It'll do my shoulders a power of good, and my back, too, for the matter of that. 'Keep yourself as warm as you can, Mrs. Marrowfat,' is what the doctor's always saying. 'Keep yourself as warm as you can, and be sure and keep off the draughts. Patty, my child, will you just see if the window's closed as it ought to be. Every minute I feel as if something came whistling to me and then ran down my back; for all the world like a stream of cold water or a live lizard. Ah, Mary, you're a lucky old woman compared with me," continued the old lady a little querulously. "*You* don't know what it is to suffer with rheumatics, and lie groaning all the night thro' with a feelin' as if a rusty ploughshare was digging into the spine of your back. Gout and rheumatics, gout and lumbager, lumbager and gout, there seems no end to it—no never."

"Now, then, just please to come out of the dolefuls, and don't be grudging me the use of my limbs," said Mrs. Plumtree. "If your going to do nothing but croak and bewail, I'm off at once."

"No, no, Mary, you won't do that," said Mrs. Marrowfat, laying her hand on that of the other. "I'm often a captious old woman, I know, and not half as thankful as I ought to be; but you see, over and above my pains and pangs, there's been all the worrit and trial of—well, you know what." Here Mrs. Marrowfat glanced significantly at Patty.

"Yes, yes, I know all about that," said Mrs. Plumtree impatiently; "but there's no use dwelling on a sore subject; and what I say, Jane, is, *battle* against these low feelings; I repeat, battle against 'em; it's the only way. Now, look here. Here's something more I've brought, which I know is just to your liking. Here's some marmelade, and a bottle of as good port wine as anybody need wish to taste. My lady herself desired me to select a bottle of the oldest, and I've done it. Bless me, Jane, if you take a drop more than you ought, you'll not know whether you're on your head or your heels. Well, then, here's some prime soup, which, when warmed up, will tempt your weak appetite, or I'm much mistaken; and here, again, is something more substantial in

the shape of a rabbit pie, which you may eat yourself or share with a friend, as you think proper. What do you say, old lady? Am I a housekeeper, or am I not?"

"I say, the Lord bless you, Mary; with my heart."

"Here Patty, my girl, I haven't forgotten the baby," continued the cherry old woman, taking a number of chemises and petticoats adapted for a very small infant out of her basket. "How'll these suit, do you think?"

"Oh, my, Mrs. Plumtree!" was all Patty could answer, as she took the things and spread them on her lap.

"They'll fit her?" said Mrs. Plumtree.

"Won't they?" said Patty. "Look, mother!"

"I'm sure, Pat, you ought to be much obliged to Mrs. Plumtree," said Mrs. Wren. "Have another cup, Mrs. Plumtree. Here, Pat, pass Mrs. Plumtree's cup.—And you, mother, you'll have some more?"

"Look, mother, what a lovely pair of socks!" said Patty. "My word, won't Fanny look smart?"

"She'll be fit to run in 'em before she knows," remarked Patty's mother.

"And do look at this petticoat, mother! A'int it a perfect pet? Look at the many stripes it's got, and the neatness of the pleats! You *will* be smart, Fan, and no mistake!"

The Fanny in question, at this moment, opened her eyes, and catching sight of her young mother's face, began to crow loudly.

"She'll be asking you to take her to church, Pat, one of these fine Sundays," said Mrs. Wren, laughing.

"I'm sure, Mrs. Plumtree, I'll never forget your kindness," said Patty.

"Well; and Mrs. Plumtree, how's the young gentleman up the way getting on?" asked Mrs. Wren. "Always growing, I suppose?"

"Growing?" said Mrs. Plumtree. "You may well say growing! I never see a Winn grow like him in my life before—never! And I've seen a few of them in my time. He grows that fast, I shall expect to see his toes peeping out through the end of his bassinet next."

"*Does* he, now?" said Mrs. Wren.

"Faster than Fanny, do you think, Mrs. Plumtree?" asked Patty.

"Well, I won't exactly say that, Patty; but there's no mistake about it, he does grow."

"Is he ever any way peevish, Mary?" asked Mrs. Marrowfat.

"*Never!*" said Mrs. Plumtree, emphatically; "that is to say, except it be when he don't get his meals quite punctually; but

that's natural. No; I will say I've never met with an infant more sweeter tempered, unless it was his own father; and nothing in the world would put *him* out when he was at a like age.

"You'll take another cup, Mrs. Plumtree?" said Mrs. Wren. "Patty, be so kind as pass Mrs. Plumtree's cup. And, I suppose, Mrs. Plumtree, the christening will be quite a grand affair! Maybe the day is fixed?"

"That it is," said Mrs. Plumtree. "It'll be just in a week come next Thursday. Both Sir Harold and my lady are determined to have it on a grand scale; in short, it will be quite a marked occasion, if I may so speak. The house will be full of company; but when it will be empty is more than I can tell. And very proper and becoming it is for Sir Harold to do it, considering the long time he had to wait before a son was born to the family. And born to *what*?" continued the housekeeper reflectively. "Ay, born to what?"

"You may ask *what*, Mary!" said Mrs. Marrowfat, nodding her head gravely.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mrs. Wren, drawing a long breath.

Patty looked at her elders in a kind of wondering reverence, while the baby crowed.

"You see," continued Mrs. Plumtree, with the pride becoming such an ancient retainer, "it's not like an ordinary event. So old as the family is, so respected in the county, and so wealthy, you may say, in possessions, to fail of a son and heir in the regular line would be—well would be—something not to be thought of."

"True, Mrs. Plumtree," said Mrs. Wren, solemnly. "In course, nobody can speak on sich a subject like yourself; sich a long time as you've been in in the family."

"Tut, tut, Betsy," put in Mrs. Marrowfat, testily; "I'd have you remember there's others been as long in the family, and not got their heads underground yet."

"She knows that well enough, Jane," said Mrs. Plumtree, soothingly.

"I'm sure I never forgot it, mother, for a moment—did I, Mr. Plumtree?" said Mrs. Wren; "so you needn't take one up so short.—Mrs. Plumtree, you'll take just another 'alf a cup? Hand the bread and butter to Mrs. Plumtree, Pat. That's the carriage, I'm sure."

When Mrs. Wren returned from opening the lodge-gate, she cast an eloquent glance on Mrs. Plumtree, and then told Patty that she would wash up the tea-things and mind the baby if she (Patty) would run round to the gardener and ask him to be so good as give her a cabbage and a carrot or two. When Patty was gone Mrs. Marrowfat looked at Mrs. Plumtree, and shook her head and mutterde:

"I thought how it would be—well, well!" And while Patty's mother was putting away the tea-things, she sighed two or three times, and said: "Ah! poor girl, she's more to be pitied than blamed." That operation being accomplished, she drew her chair close to Mrs. Plumtree, first of all saying: "You're quite sure you won't take another 'alf a cup, Mrs. Plumtree?"

"No, thank you, my dear—not another drop for me on any account," said the housekeeper.

Then Mrs. Wren began knitting very hard and shook her head at Mrs. Plumtree in a significant way and murmured: "It's-'eart breaking."

"She takes it terribly to heart, I suppose?" said Mrs. Plum tree.

"Oh! she takes on awful sometimes; that bad you'd never believe, Mrs. Plumtree."

"You can't wonder at it, Mrs. Wren. The loss of character and situation, and the burden of the child and the sorrow to you; and, worst of all, the shame and disgrace—it's enough to make her pine and worrit, poor girl!"

"I often catch her on the quiet sobbing that violent it would melt a stone to see her," said Mrs. Wren, wiping her eyes. "You see, Mrs. Plumtree, what she takes most to heart is her old sweet-heart, Jack Ribstone, knowing about it; not that Pat ever had herself any feeling for Jack over and above common acquaintances, and having a bit of fun with him now and then; but she can't get over the notion that perhaps he's looking down on her, or, least-ways, thinking her an object of pity. The more so as I fancy my lady used to toss her head, and give him it rather sharp, when he wanted to come any of his cooing ways with her."

"Ah!" said Mrs. Plumtree, "she will, of course, feel it bitterly, poor child!"

"But, then, as I said to her, Mrs. Plumtree, you needn't be so downhearted as all that, Pat. I'm sure Jack's not the lad to look down upon you—he's too noble-hearted, much; and, trust my word for it, he'd be the first to knock any man down who dared to point the finger of scorn. And, believe me it's a fact Mrs. Plumtree; for I met Jack a week after Pat's babe was born, and he spoke to me about her, and I must say no young man could have spoken more feelingly. Of course, he was greatly put about, that you'll believe. Well, as I said to Pat, it's not you that Jack will cast reproaches at, my girl, either by word or hact; it's only them that brought you to this pass that he'll never forgive, *whoever* they be; and woe betide them if they come within the length of Jack's right arm. You know, Mrs. Plumtree, Jack Ribstone's got a fist fit to fell an ox."

"Likely enough," said Mrs. Plumtree, "considering the trade he follows. But, Mrs. Wren, I wanted to ask you; you haven't discovered the real fellow, have you?"

"No, Mrs. Plumtree, I have not. Pat seems determined on that point, and as close as a mouse. Of course, I taxed her with it, were it only to find some means of getting him to help support the baby; but the poor girl wept so bitter, and beseeched me so not to ask his name, that I hadn't the heart to go on."

"You've no suspicions yourself?" asked Mrs. Plumtree.

"Why, no; I can't say I have, Mrs. Plumtree. You see Patty's been in Mrs. Winn's service ever since she went to London, and I've had no means of knowing who she kept company with. They say London's a mighty big place compared to other towns, and Pat may have had a score of fellows makin' up to her—worse luck!"

"True," said Mrs. Plumtree; "she may and she may not. Patty's never mentioned any one to you; I mean, in the way of seeming extra partial to them?"

"Not a syllable, Mrs. Plumtree. Since she's been home no dummy could have been closer than Pat; and, then, you know, when she was in London she didn't write above once a quarter, when she received her wages, and that wasn't much more than to say she 'oped it found us well as it left her."

"And you've no suspicions?" repeated Mrs. Plumtree slowly.

"Ne'er a word, Mrs. Plumtree."

"Well, I have," said Mrs. Plumtree emphatically.

"You don't mean it, Mrs. Plumtree?"

"I do, indeed, Mrs. Wren. And, what's more, from what I've been informed in a certain quarter, I'm certain I'm right."

"Lor'! Mrs. Plumtree, you make me all of a tremble. Who, now——"

"Yes, I'm convinced I've hit the mark," said Mrs. Plumtree; "but——"

"But what, ma'am?" asked Mrs. Wren anxiously.

"But I am not going to let out what I think in the meantime, Mrs. Wren," said Mrs. Plumtree decisively. "It will be wiser for all parties to keep silence till I get further proof. For the present, mind—for Heaven's sake!—not to breathe a word to Patty. Time will show; but, mark my words, Mrs. Wren, the thing was commenced in Mr. Winn's house."

"Lor'! Mrs. Plumtree, you don't mean to say——" began Patty's mother, laying down her knitting, and drawing in her breath and protruding her eyes in a way quite painful to behold—"you don't mean to say——"

"Hush!" said Mrs. Plumtree; "here's Patty coming back. I

must be going now; but I'll look in one of these days, and have another talk about the matter."

"Do, Mrs. Plumtree," said Mrs. Wren; "and be sure you drop in about tea-time. There's nothing so supporting at your time of life; though, to be sure, what we can give is but poor compared with what you make in your own room up at the house. Well, Pat, so you've got me my carrots? Help Mrs. Plumtree with her shawl, my girl."

"Good-bye, Jane," said Mrs. Plumtree to Mrs. Marrowfat, who was just waking up from a doze. "Don't spare the pie, old lady; but I particularly recommend the soup."

"God bless you, Mary; but it's but a poor visit you've paid me, after all," said the old woman, in a grumbling tone. "You'll not be so long next time, eh?"

"I won't promise, seeing the bother and worrit I've got on my shoulders just now," said Mrs. Plumtree. "But you may depend on it, I'll look in my first spare moment—My dear, whatever you do, mind and keep up your spirits, and your appetite," added the excellent housekeeper, in a whisper to Patty, as the young mother let her out. "We'll bring it all right and square for you some of these days. Take care of Fanny."

SISTE VIATOR.

'Tis pity our fortunes are laid
  Within old King Mammon's dominions ;
Where Cupid wants valet and maid
  To keep in good order his pinions.

Time was when the question of rent
  Disturbed not calm Poverty's slumbers,
When heaven's starry vault was the tent
  That shaded the closed eyes of numbers.

When in every verdurous glade
  Sang Corydon, Damon, or Thyrsis,
While fruit-trees a banquet displayed
  That suited the slend'rest of purses.

'Tis sad that *we* cannot sustain
  Good temper on water and pottage,
That Reason rejects with disdain
  The notion of "love in a cottage."

They say 'tis all sugar one year,
  And then strife and squalor for twenty,
When mutton comes terribly dear,
  But small mouths to eat it come plenty.

But yet, for us mortals who love
  There's a something true pleasure bestowing;
Our sky is all shining above,
  The earth at our feet is all glowing.

When I walk with the girl I love best,
  The Schlossberg's* a garden of roses ;
Though on other occasions I'm blest
  With one of the keenest of noses.

I vow that I never will prove
  To heart's purest dictates a traitor ;
But him that is turning from love,
  I hail with a "Siste Viator."

H. E. W.

* The Schlossberg is a street of somewhat ill-savour, in a well-known town on the Continent, where these lines were written.

COMING TROUBLES.

THOSE who live in the suburbs of London know the delights of having the house next door to them vacant. No more music to *rouse* the savage breast as it enters through the partition wall scarcely thicker than paper; inconvenient servant-friendships broken off; isolation from children, who at any moment might have shared their scarlatina with our little ones: hens for ever removed from the garden, and the screeching of parrots and barking of dogs from our ears. They're gone!—our neighbours! we gasp with joy, seeing the first appearance of "House to Let" on the window and hearing the retreating wheels of the last furniture, and (to us) nuisance-removing van. But our respite only lasts for a few months! "The bills are off the window next door, *quel malheur!*" exclaims the whole family in chorus at dinner some day, as each individual brings home the dismal news, and the furniture vans were being unloaded all the day. "I wonder what the people are like! Did any one see how many pianos, violins, and musical boxes, called babies, arrived? Dear me! troubles are always coming! How nice it would be to have a detached house, I only hope they won't be like the other people. Well, if they are even as good. But they could not be worse." Stop stop! Miss Uncharitable. There was really much good in the last people, quite as much as in ourselves, only I do fear coming troubles from the new arrival." With what anxiety does a mistress "welcome" a new "help" in these days of bad servants, seeing in her arrival a seed of coming troubles, that may at some time grow into a Upas-tree capable of poisoning the peace of the house! May not Mary Jane have numerous followers,—may she not insist on wearing her hair and having her dresses cut after the exact pattern of the young ladies'? To pay for this little game of "follow the leader," may not Mary Jane take for her motto—"Put money in thy purse," dishonestly, since you cannot do so honestly: and, worst of all, may she not degenerate into a helpless "lady-help" and refuse to do anything? On the other hand, as bad mistresses are quite as common as bad servants, the shadow of coming troubles may well darken poor Mary Jane's spirit as she knocks at the door of her new "place." The Sunday visit of her "young man" may be prohibited. It may be impossible to please the mistress or to put up with her nagging. Presuming on her own long service and high position, cook may bully the new housemaid. Her

life may become a burden to her by reason of the complaints of spoiled children. Late hours, hard work and no play, may break down Mary Jane's health, and then——

"The cry is still they come," shouted Macbeth, when he heard the repeated announcement of hostile armies moving to his ruin; and this is the constant wail of many, who, always croaking of coming troubles, never even by chance look on the bright side of things. With fear and trembling such men enter a profession as, for instance, that of the bar. "Just to have the name of something to do, you know; not that they ever expect to get business." They know not an attorney's daughter. Then, going on circuit will be so ruinously expensive. Never, never will the winter of their discontented brief-less-ness be made a glorious practice by a lucky "hit." Nothing but trouble to come. Do these prophets of woe enter the medical profession? Then they pity all who may call them in, and begin to be anxious about the troubles coming to their patients; not to speak of how they themselves must inevitably stare when rumour proclaims their incapaci If they think of commerce, "Who does not know," say they, how variable is the barometer of trade, one day up and another down; in it a man is never proof against beggary?" And as for the profession of literature, editors and publishers are in danger of being buried alive in proffered MSS., and few have the honour of knowing a "girl of the period," who does *not* write. At last, so many are the troubles Mr. Hopeless anticipates, should he enter a profession at all uncertain, that he too often comes to the unfortunate conclusion that the best thing he can do is to content himself with the certain pittance of a curate. And how dismally do such men preach their message of glad tidings!

Were some kind-hearted person, pitying this type of mind, to give the unfortunate possessor of it a few thousand pounds, so as to lessen his anxiety with respect to professional prospects, would such liberality brighten the future? By no means; for how could he invest the gift in such a way as would insure him against coming troubles? His mind would be tossed to and fro, and blown about by every breath of Stock-Exchange gossip until the money, intended to give him peace succeeded in making shipwreck of his senses.

To spring out of bed at seven o'clock on a cold winter morning—to help oneself when hungry from an *entree* of the contents of which you are ignorant—to refuse the loan of your name to a business man who has invited you to dinner for the express purpose of asking it,—these are feats of no ordinary daring; but they cannot compare with the courage of the man of thirty-five years, w against every argument his instinct of caution could suggest,

plunges into matrimony. How many were the coming troubles his imagination used to conjure up when the *pros* and *cons* of the question—*his* Eastern Question—were being considered! There was an undefinable, ghostly dread of the unknown generally. And when he tried to grapple with the impalpable vagueness of his apprehensions—when he cried out to them "take any shape but that of formless uncertainty, and my firm nerves shall never tremble,"—the forms into which his fears did shape themselves were scarcely reassuring. An extravagant, useless, ball-loving wife, unlimited little boots and shoes to be provided, a doctor's bill that could only be described by Euclid's definition of a line, "length without breadth,"—these were some of the visions that troubled his sleep when "to be or not to be"—married, that was the question. This dread of possible matrimonial trouble has been known in a few instances to drive cowardly bridegrooms to escape their fate by suicide on the wedding morning. They had not enough sense left to see that, since that last resource is always open, they need not have been so hasty in using it.

But suppose preliminaries and marriage ceremony to have been got through at last, 'for better, for worse;' does the old bachelor, spoiled now, cease to fear coming troubles? No, for he becomes heretical enough to doubt the Psalmist's assurance that he will be blessed if his quiver be well filled with children. Where is he to shoot them to? he thinks; girls are so hard to "get off," and boys are often far from a success when they grow up. An infectious disease is in the neighbourhood: what is he to do should it swoop down upon his chicks? An increasing family necessitates his removing into a larger house—may not damp and bad drainage curse the domestic bliss which, contrary to the forebodings of his bachelor days, he is enjoying?

The children of such fathers may have a happy Christmas; but New-Year's day is always a day of gloom to *paterfamilias*. Instead of thinking how much worse off his family might have been in the past year, he sighs to thinks how badly off they are, and how much worse they will be during the year just begun. There is nothing of the "Put-your-trust-in-God,-my-boys,-and-keep-your-powder-dry!" spirit about these men.

The absurdity of meeting trouble half way is shown by an instance of this habit, very common among the poor, who torment themselves quite unnecessarily about their burial. Yet, surely, even for their own sake our survivors will put us under the ground; we may make our minds easy about that, and, as for a "decent burial," the only direction we ourselves would care to leave on this head would be *simplex munditiis*. If "neat in her simplicity," be the best compliment we can pay to a lady's toilette, simple neatness is

as rare, but quite as high, an excellency in a funeral. Hence, horrible shadows of black palls and subdued-looking horses! hence, unreal mockery of mutes and black guardsmen!

Fretful characters are greatly to be pitied when their fault is the result of a misdirected virtue—earnestness engrossed with trifles. Their sense of justice, for instance, is strong accordingly; they start on a tour without any joy, having before their eyes a vision of cheating hotel keepers. Recognising the fact that extravagance is a great sin in a world full of hunger and nakedness, they torment themselves every day at dinner by imagining all the bad uses, or *no* uses, to which cook may put the fragments that are left. Such people ought, for their own comfort, to make up their minds to lose a certain amount each year at the hands of thieves generally, and of wasteful servants in particular. Having done their best to minimise this amount, they should say to themselves, "We must all endure a certain amount of cheating, as we must all swallow a certain amount of dirt, physically, and of insult, morally. What am I, that I should expect to escape every troublesome insect of daily life, that sting men and women far better than myself?"

"Dear me! how much better that matter turned out than I expected!" This common exclamation of melancholy persons points to the silver that lines the dark cloud of their lot. They are always being agreeably surprised, happy people! while to the sanguine everything is a disagreeable surprise. And, first, our neighbours, whose arrival next door caused such alarm, instead of being "odious," were discovered to be very civil, "so nice!" "quite charming!" We were a long time in getting to know them, as is the case with suburban Londoners; but the knowledge did come at last, and in this way. The same doctor happened to attend both families, so we diagnosed each other through him, by asking him a few searching questions as to what kind the people were next door. How anxiously we peeped through the Venetian blinds, on the first Sunday after their arrival, to see whether our new neighbours would turn towards church or towards chapel; and if to church, to what church—high, low, or nondescript? Can it be?—yes, they are actually going to our church. The ice of our shyness could not but be thawed by this circumstance; for the awkwardness of walking home speechless on the same path from a place where we were all labelled "dear brethren," became even more disagreeable than a first exchange of greeting. From time to time different members of the two families got ill, and this fact occasioned a few tentative civilities in the shape of jelly, little puddings, two newly-laid eggs, "with compliments,"—the milk of human kindness served up in tempting little ways, developing at last into a very pleasant, instead of a very unpleasant, acquaintanceship with our once-dreaded neighbours.

No more than the first did the second coming trouble ever come; for Mary Jane has turned out "quite a treasure," nor has she more than the average complaints to make against her situation.

We cannot say that we have "got on" as much as we could wish in our profession, but we are pretty "snug," and (except by accident) have never once in all our life been really hungry.

Shall we say anything about the "sore subject of matrimony," as we used to call it in our bachelor days? Only this, that our experience of it is by no means so disagreeable as was the anticipation. My wife is *not* extravagant, for she saves much of the money formerly spent on cigars, theatre-tickets, and bachelor pleasures generally; so, in spite of *her* milliner's bills, by means of the economy that is forced upon the gentleman-help, or husband, we contrive to make ends meet. She is *not* useless, for she can superintend the cook, often keeps me from making a fool of myself; and, though ball-loving, she has surrendered that *casus belli* in exchange for some habits of mine that irritated her. Of children we have none; so I need not have fretted about their settlement in life, or the expenses of their little boots and shoes. In your ear, reader, let me whisper that my lonely heart often sighs for little feet to shoe. For some years my wife was a great invalid; but I found that sickness in a house is by no means as bad a thing as I thought it would be. My endeavours to please her prevented that thinking and feeling of self which cankers the happiness of so many bachelors, old maids, and even of married people, who have not yet discovered how foolish Stern was, when, after reading for his text the words, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting," he commenced his sermon with the words —"that I deny." My wife's sick room has taught me, among other things, that this criticism of the humorous preacher was very unphilosophical; for there I learned that troubles can, if we allow them, cure us of much of our querulous, peevish selfishness.

There is a healthy, happy way of living in the present that should be aimed at by those who torment themselves with too much looking before and after. Burying the past out of sight, and staying our souls with the anchor of hope against coming storms, we should endeavour to throw ourselves intensely into every action and pleasure, however small, however simple. "Rejoice in your youth, ere the days come when you shall say, I have no pleasure;" for he who says, "I will be happy some day," never will be happy at all. "With what I most enjoy contented least," or, worse still, "whose only pleasure is to be displeased,"—this is a condition of mind that comes from not living enough in the present, from not saying, *Now* is the accepted time.

Consider the lilies of the field and the fowls of the air, how they

are cared for without fretful anxiety on their part. This calming advice of a loving Teacher should not be slighted by a generation wearied with the fretful stir unprofitable, and fever of "getting on," or the no-less-sad, but excusable and even praiseworthy, "heavy trouble and bewildering care, that weigh us down who live and earn our bread." Of course, to a certain extent, a man ought to be both careful and anxious. We must take a moderate amount of thought for the morrow if we are to continue alive in these times so hard upon all but butchers. Indeed, those young persons are very culpable who carelessly enter upon engagements which they cannot keep. Doing so, they trifle with laws of social well-being, ordained by God himself, and bring upon all connected with them most burdensome consequences. And as regards the sin and disgrace of idleness, the old Jewish proverb well says, "That if any man do not teach his son a trade he teaches him to steal."

Idleness, however, is far from being the besetting sin of Englishmen of our day. Our danger, in this age of competition—when every driver on the road of life is nothing unless, Jehu-like, he can pass all others—is *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas.*

The too earnest pursuit of what we call "success" and a "comfortable" maintenance is taking all comfort out of our lives. We cannot make ourselves sufficiently easy to absorb the sunshine of the moment. To-day may be well-enough, we admit; but what of the possible woes that are laid up in the future? Mr. Take-Credit will never be able to pay for the goods he has ordered. A company has failed, why may not the one in which my money is invested also fail? We have just posted a business letter, and we begin to fret if a reply does not arrive even before the next delivery. The future hides in it *both* gladness and sorrow; why, then, should we in this way render ourselves wretched by expecting only the sorrow?

This dread of coming troubles is so great in some people that they spend years speculating on what they ought to do in any crisis of their lives—years that would have been better employed in doing it. They forget that "not to resolve is to resolve." Lady Macduff is made to say, "when our actions do not, our fears do make us traitors," and certainly if fears do not make us traitors to others, they very often prevent us from making the most of ourselves.

When we come, in our walk through life, to a river difficult to cross, we shall never get on if we stand on the bank looking into the dark waters, instead of making a plunge. Had Napoleon allowed his native hue of resolution to be sicklied o'er with the pale cast of Hamlet's thought, enterprises of great pith and moment would have lost the name of action. When the great general was

once asked how he could possibly have won a certain victory with such odds against him, "By my rashness," was his reply. In such matters as the choice of a profession or of a wife there must be a certain venture of faith, and in this unintelligible world there is a rashness which is not always folly.

E. J. HARDY.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

TWICE-treasured flowers, relics of love's dear thought,
Upon my heart to-night the dead years lie;
The lily isle of childhood loometh nigh;
The fairy-land that fades so soon to nought,
When the first sight hath cruel havoc wrought
Amongst the clustered dew-drops: Time doth fly
With careless flight to reach Eternity,
Heeding no moan of death—in vain besought
To hover with hushed wing above one hour
That liveth as a joy-resplendent rose
In a rich flush of noon; his grasp of power
Doth rend the soul asunder from repose,
Onward we hie, through storm, and sun, and shower,
Knowing deep roots will future blooms disclose.

ELLIS ERLE.

WILLIAM AND HETTY.

THE village bells were ringing,
Ringing a merry peal,
The tiny birds were singing
The joys that birds can feel.

The sun across the meadows,
His beams benignant shed.
Beneath the drooping willows,
The brook pellucid sped.

The air was filled with gladness
And sweetness of the flowers,
That found no cause for sadness,
In their wild, fragrant bowers.

How joyous were the voices
Of village man and maid!
The village self rejoices,
In summer bloom arrayed.

But there was *one* repining,
Who heard the gladsome strain,
To whom the summer's shining
Brought nought but grief and pain.

Scarce twelve short months have flitted
Since "William" first had woo'd
The maid by all admitted
As fair, and chaste, and good.

What though her birth was lowly,
And he of high degree,
True love is pure and holy,
And scorns the world's decree.

He whisper'd his devotion
And called (to prove his love),
The billows of the ocean,
The stars of Heaven above,

She loved him well and truly,
Alas, that it was so;
For love is still unruly,
And her's was doomed to woe.

When summon'd to the City
(Cursed be that fatal day),
Fondly he kissed poor Hetty,
Then tore himself away.

Though only for a season,
It wrung her faithful breast,
Like one bereft of reason,
Her fears could find no rest.

She strove to quell the feeling
Which racked her aching heart,
The sad, stern truth revealing,
That they had now to part.

Calm as the evening, like a statue still,
Intent upon one object down the hill,
She pensive gazed, the tear-drop in her eye,
When William turned, and waved his last "good-bye."

Cold as the snow, on winter's rugged steep,
She pressed her throbbing bosom to allay
Its sinking, and it's grief, too full to weep,
Her chamber sought, to hope, to fear, to pray.

Oh, Lord! protect and guide him,
My prayer shall ever be;
With faith and truth provide him,
And bring him back to me.

Hoping, yet fearing (such is woman's love),
Like Noah's messenger, the faithful dove,
Trusting to find some footing to alight
Amidst the darkness of creation's might,
Fearing across the broad expanse to sail,
And doubting lest her drooping wing should fail.

And all that autumn long she hoped.
Poor Hetty hoped and feared,
And now and then a letter came,
And then her soul was cheered.

But soon these comforters fell short,
And then they wholly ceased;
And as the days thus flitted by,
Poor Hetty's dread increased.

And gentle summer came again,
When he was to return;
But ah! she only saw him then
His faithlessness to learn.

For, like a numbing, blasting frost,
She heard it had been said,
That William had inconstant proved
To her—poor trusting maid.

And to the altar soon would lead
A lady rich and fair—
Alas! how could he then forget,
The poor heart breaking there?

And so at length the day arrived
When he was to be wed—
The news, in every eager face,
Poor Hetty weeping read.

The noontide summer heat has left the plain,
The day itself is verging towards the wane;
The glorious sun illumines with his fire
The golden West, and lights his fun'ral pyre;
Sinks in the ruins of the blazing heap,
While o'er the azure heavens the red flames leap;
The fields of waving corn, still green and young,
Kiss in the breeze the earth from which they sprung;
The lark on high trills out her evening lay,
Chanting the dirge of the declining day—
The cloud of busy gnats make up their share
Of the small world that seems so happy there—
While that strange music, with its fairy sound.
The harmony of nature steals around.

But does not every outward pleasure add
A poignant anguish to the heart that's sad?
And every happy face our grief provoke,
Adding a burden to our heavy yoke?

As "Hetty" gazed out on the ev'ning scene,
Upon the landscape in its calm serene,
Each smiling object seemed her grief to know,
And in its own content to mock her woe.

She fancied every tree bowed by the wind
A laughing fiend that mocks the human kind;
"Where's William now?" the question seemed to be,
"Wooing thy rival, as he once wooed thee!"

She sat her at her window,
O'er which the jessamine,
Arched like the weeping willow,
And met the creeping vine.

Her beauteous face sunk resting
Upon her lily hand,
And sadly, sadly musing,
The dreary picture scann'd.

"Ah, me!" she murmured slowly,
Heaving a deep-drawn sigh;
"My heart is breaking slowly;
Ah! father, let me die."

The moon is shining,
Her light combining
With the modest beam—
That lightly dancing,
The mind entrancing,
Doth from each star-world gleam.

The owl awaking,
The glow-worm making
Its strange lantern seen;
And the nightingale's
Sweet song prevails
Through all the woodlands green.

Now the evening breezes blow,
Whither, whence, no man can know,
Keeping fast the secret nature
Of their home from human creature;
Like a spirit, never telling
Of its own mysterious dwelling:

The timid hare has left her rest,
The swallow seeks her downy nest,
The drooping blue-bell her repose,
The wild thyme, and the blushing rose,
In his home the shepherd dozes,
By his side his dog reposes.

At the ale-house the song goes round,
And mirth and homely wit abound;
The farmer rests his tired horse,
And joins his neighbours in discourse,
All chatting of the village news,
As sagely, each the day reviews,
The coming wedding has its share,
Of joke and shrewd remark to bear.
Says one, "Friends, my opinion 'tis,
That sure the squire the devil is,
To win a bride so rich and fair,
With *real* diamonds in her hair,
With all her satins, silks, and laces,
And her proud looks and swelling graces;
The squire it needs must be confest,
Has all to make him passing blest."

The angry farmer then replies,
(Apostrophising his own eyes),
That "though the squire may be the devil,
It is because his heart is evil."
He wonders how the squire could dare
To woo a maid, though rich and fair,
When he his plighted troth had given,
Before the sight of man and heaven,
To a poor girl as fair as she,
Though rich she did not hap to be,
And that he knew her hapless fate,
The squire repenting when too late.
But all the while this talk went round,
Still at her window "Hetty's" found,
Unconscious she of wh.. they said,
She only knew her loss, poor maid.

The pale-faced moon had risen high,
Still sat poor "Hetty" there,
And from her bosom heaved a sigh,
That spoke her mute despair.

"Oh! Heavenly Father," murmured she,
(Lifting to heaven her eyes),
"Why has he thus forsaken me,
Whose only love I prize."

Pale as the marble cold her cheek,
She solitary sat,
How soft her looks, her eyes how meek,
And ah! how desolate!

With hopeless grief all in her face,
She presently arose,
Her little chamber 'gan to pace,
Her passion to compose.

The evening zephyr gently fanned
And cooled her burning brow,
But still the burning fire within
Raged e'en as fiercely now.

The bleakest wind can ne'er destroy
The fire within the heart,
Though it can blow tall forests down,
And mountains wrench apart.

She reached the stile near which the streamlet flowed,
Where he had often met her with a smile,
Where he a thousand times his love had vowed,
And sought to gain her heart by every wile.

The fond and dreamy hopes, the joy that thrilled
Through her delighted soul, her bosom filled,
Where now are they? all wither'd, crush'd, and dead,
Dead as the soldier, who in battle shed,
His blood on gory fields, for empires vast,
Dead as the million sleepers of the past!

She turned, and looked upon the place,
Whence she so oft had come,
Where she had run her childhood's race,
Her once dear happy home.

But what could cheer her in the scene?
It only gave her pain,
To see those spots where *he* had been,
Where he'd ne'er come again.

Oh! cursed word, thrice cursed thought,
That he has ever gone!
That those dear joys his presence brought
Will never more return!

(Such thoughts as these will make the tear
Rise meekly to the eye,
And like a flower deprived of light,
E'en bow the head and die.)

"He has more than me forsaken,"
Poor "Hetty" sadly cried,
"And falsely has he taken,
Another for his bride.

May she he loves be true to him,
And may he never know,
The agony I now endure,
My God! the heart's deep woe."

The limpid stream goes coursingly,
How fresh and cool it seems,
As o'er its glassy surface fall
The moonlight's gentle beams!

How fev'rish hot poor "Hetty's" breast!
How parched her burning lips!
Unconsciously (she stooping low)
Her hand the water dips.

Oft by its banks had "William" stood,
She fondly by his side;
And tenderly there spoke the words,
That lovers' lips confide.

How lonely was the tranquil scene!
No one was passing by,
And, what a pleasant thing it seemed,
To lay one down and die!

"Why should she live?" poor "Hetty" thought;
What joys could life e'er bring?
But death could bring forgetfulness,
And death's an easy thing.

When for the West the sun deserts,
Deserts the pining day,
She ne'er survives the cold neglect,
But meekly dies away.

'Tis but a little spring—and then,
And then—why should she stay?
There's no one now to care for her,
When *she* has gone away.

There was a splash within the stream;
And then a low, long wail;
And then a bubbling circle spread,
And told the solemn tale.

And this was, then, the means she sought
To ease her bosom's woes,
The balm that with her life she bought,
The river's deep repose!

BRIEF AND VARIOUS.

SEISTÂN.

SEISTÂN is the name given to that outlying territory between Persia and Afghanistan, the centre of which is occupied by the great lake Zarah (Aria Lacus), and which, under its existing appellation of Zarah Hamûn, still retains its old Zend epithet. The inhabitants were called Zarangæ, a name also derived from the Zend-Zaray, meaning "sea," or, rather, those who dwell on or near the sea or lake (Zarah). It is easy to understand how the Zarangæ of Herodotus, Pliny, Arrian, and others, became the Drangæ and Drangian of Strabo, Ammianus Marcellinus, and other old geographers and historians. In the Persia cuneiform inscription at Bahistan, according to Sir Henry Rawlinson, the country is called Zasaka, from which we have also Sacastene, another mediæval name.

Seistân was conquered by Cyrus, who, according to the historians of Alexander the Great, called the region, known to them as Ariaspe, or properly Zariaspa, also from Zarah (see Pliny, vi., xxii.), by the name of Evergetas. The same country, when conquered by Alexander, was united with the adjacent provinces under one satrap. Its fortunes were, however, by a curious coincidence, attached to those of Cyrus; for, passing at Alexander's death to his generals, it was given by Antipater to Stasander of Cyprus. As history proverbially repeats itself, this may have a signification, which is at present only looming in the distance—as in Sir F. Goldsmid's dream of a railway by Southern Persia and Seistân to the Indus.

This region is watered by the river Etymander (now Halmand or Helmund), and other minor streams, and situated as it is in a not arid sandy region, it, in fact, owes its existence, as a popular and fertile country, to these rivers, and to its great lake or marsh.

In ancient times the two chief cities were Prophthasia, supposed to be the modern Farah, and Zarang or Zarendj, the ruins of which are said to exist under the name of Zarah, south of the lake. Prophthasia was, according to Ptolemy, situated below the Bagoo mountain (now the Hazareh), and another town Ariaspe or Zariaspe, the same as Zarah, was situated near Mount Becio, or Nûr-manshir. The Alexandrian geographer gives the names of nine other old towns, and Isidorus, of Charax, adds two more.

To the Persians the country was known as that of Sedjestân, or Segestân, whence its modern appellation of Seistan. Hamzah points out, when explaining the name and that of Ispahan, that in Persian the words Ispah and Sej have the same signification—that is, Sipah (our sepoy), in Talysch; and that both countries were so called because they were garrisoned by Sipahis or sepoys. (Yakut's *Modjem el Buldan*, word Seistân; *Nuzet* of Ahmed Razi, same word.)

It is related by the Muhammadan writers that, when the country was conquered by the followers of the prophet, the Sejestani only stipulated that their hedgehogs should not be killed, for the country is so infested by venomous reptiles that every house had its hedgehog.

It is, further, although remarkably fertile in parts, subjected to violent winds, which rouse up dangerous storms of sands; but they were once utilised for propelling innumerable windmills. The drawbacks to pleasurable existence and prosperity are, however, so great that a Persian poet once apostrophised the country in indignant terms: "Oh! Sejestân, may the clouds refuse to you their beneficent rain, may ruins and the desert cover thy soil! In winter thou art the abode of suffering and misfortune; in summer a mass of serpents and insects. Thou art a country subject to a wakil (a delegate), and to violent storms, which cover you with sand as with a shroud. God created you for the punishment of men and made of you a hell!"

Seistân, however, according to the same Muhammadan writers, gave birth to many learned and pious men; it was the country of the great hero of romance—Rustam—and it was at one time ruled by its own Amîrs, amongst whom Abû Ahmed Khalif was as celebrated for his learning and piety as for his good government, yet he perished in a dungeon in India. As Ali, it is related, after cursing all the pulpits of the east and west, only cursed that of Sejestân once, it was, and still is, in certain portions a great stronghold of the Shi'ah faith, and hence an additional source of hostility between its Tajik and its Afghan and Biluch population.

Its chief towns were at this epoch Zalek, Kirkiyeh, Hissum, Zarendj, and Ram Shehristân (the two last successive capitals of the country), as also Bost, where were the ruined stables of the hero—Rustam. But the government conferred upon Rustam by Kai Kaus was, however, Rokkhej, in the province of Dawar, on the Halmand, or *Hendmend*, as Yakut has it.

The actual boundaries of Seistân, which, geographically speaking, comprises the territory around the Zarah Lake, and which is watered by the Halmand, the Farah Rud (ancient Pharnacotis), and other tributaries to the lake, have never been determined.

Hence Captain Conolly limited Seistân proper to the low and flat country which surrounds the great lake; but Kinneir and Elphinstone gave to the region its ancient extension from the foot of the Hazareh mountains (Bagoo), southwards to the mountains (Becio), and deserts of Biluchistan. Sir F. Goldsmid has still more recently, and more authoritatively, marked out Seistân, as a triangular plot with its base resting upon the Hazareh mountains, and its apex touching the Halmand river.

Major-General Sir F. Goldsmid was the chief of a commission specially appointed to define the frontier, and to settle disputes that had arisen between Persia and Afghanistan as to the extent of country which belonged to each. The Persian claims dated back to a remote antiquity—to the times of the son of Cambyses. The aborigines were said to be Tajiks, and there were patriotic, religious, historical, and poetic associations mixed up with the Persians' love of the rich delta of the Halmand—traditions of the grand old times when Rustam was a hero, and when the warlike natives were a power in the land, and repelled the Arab conquerors who had overrun Persia with their fanatic soldiery.

Then, again, there was an emigration of Persians in the time of Nadir Shah, who transported thither, bodily, the Shakruki and the Sarbandi, and other tribes from the neighbourhood of Hamadan. In Captain Conolly's map the Sarbandis occupy the country along the eastern banks of the old Hamûn, and at a still greater distance are settled the Shakrukis and Nahr-ois. The Shakrukis claim Dasht-uk, or Dashak, also known as Jellalabad, as their capital. The Nahr-ois claim Burj (the tower or castle), and probably the Bhost of Rustam, as their capital; and the country of the Sarbandis contains two considerable places, Chuling and Sekuka.

On the other hand the Afghans claimed that upon Nadir Shah's death, the founder of the Durani dynasty—Ahmed Abdallah—"Ahmed, the servant of God," seized Seistân, which, with Afghanistan proper, Kashmir, Pashawûr, and Scinde, were welded into one great empire.

There can be little doubt, looking at the question in a purely geographical point of view, that the valley of the Halmand and the great lake or marsh of Zarah, are part of Afghanistan, or of the power that rules in Hîrat, Kabul, and Kandahar. All the mountain torrents and rivers that flow into Lake Zarah and the Dák-i-Tîr, as a portion of the lake is called, flow from the southern and western side of the mountains of Afghanistan. The Halmand rises at no great distance from Kabul, and the plain of Kandahar constitutes with the plain of Seistân, one and the same basin. The natural frontiers of Afghanistan would appear to be, to the north, the Paropamisus; to the west, the Koh-i-Bandah; to the south,

the Nûr-man-shir; and, to the east, the Suliman range. There are, however, as many Biluchis in Southern Seistân, as there are Afghans or Persians.

The question, however simple in a geographical point of view has become very complicated in its political aspects. When the Durani dynasty passed away, there came a period of transition, in which the chiefs of the country gave their allegiance alternately to Hîrat and Kandahar. It was only in 1851 that the country again came under the sway of Persia, its then ruler, Ali Khan, revolting from the Kandahar Government, and electing to live under the protection of the Shah. This Ali Khan was afterwards slain in a border fray, and his nephew and successor, Taj Muhammad, rejected his late uncle's policy towards Persia, preferring greater independence for himself and his subjects. In 1862, the Amîr, Dost Muhammad, however, marching upon Hîrat, Taj Muhammad found himself obliged to seek the protection of the Shah, or to succumb to Afghan rule.

Thus commenced an era of troubles, which have never yet ceased. They have, indeed, simmered sometimes fiercely, and at others the country being so remote and so little visited, quite unnoticed up to the present time. In 1864 an appeal was made by the Amîr and Shah to the British Government to settle the question as to the real status of Seistân, but Lord Russell declined to interfere. Soon after, the Shah resolved to settle the question by force and he sent an army across the Khorasan mountains, and in 1867 he formally annexed the country.

The Amîr did not, however, accept the loss as final, but reopened the question at the Umballah Durbar two years afterwards. As a sequence of this, Sir F. Goldsmid's mission was appointed, and the result of this mission has been one of the grievances set forth by the Amîr Shîr Ali against us; just as had it been entirely hostile to Persian pretensions, it would have created a similar bad feeling at the Court of the Shah. As it was, Persia claimed an extent of territory, at least six times the size of that awarded, while the Afghan representative wished the Hazareh range to be the actual frontier.

It was no easy matter—indeed, it was almost impossible—to settle such differences satisfactorily by arbitration. The Persian authorities in Seistân pursued the same policy of obstinate obstructiveness that they have displayed in Sulaimaniyah and other parts of the Turco-Persian frontier. The inhabitants were strictly enjoined to give no information; and, whenever the Commissioners tried to examine boundaries or to question minor officials, they only met with disheartening rebuffs. Thus discomfited on the spot, they took their way to Teheran, and there and under the

influence of the Court, an award was given by which Persia was to retain all the country except a tract on the north bank of the Halmand. Unfortunately both Afghans and Persians were alike discontented with the award. The Afghans were ousted altogether out of Seistân proper, and the Persians on their side grudged even the partial cession made to Afghanistan, as the district ceded was said by them to be hallowed by tradition.

The Afghans were even more exasperated, as they looked to the British to expel the Persians, "bag and baggage," from the soil. The award has, however, been justified on the plea that the present reigning family at Kabul—the Baruksais—have no claim by descent from Ahmed Abdullah; and, failing the Durani dynasty, the Persian steps in as a matter of right. But to this it may be opposed that, by its geographical position, whoever or whatsoever family rules at Kandahar and Hirat, should also, for the completeness of its territory, for its own safety and peaceful government, rule in Seistân. Suppose there were some Germans in Alsatia, or in Schleswig-Holstein, that does not render the territory German, any more than some Persians having been translated by Nadir Shah to the banks of the Halmand makes that country Persian. But the modern doctrine advocates that such decisions should be determined by the majority, and it was by such a principle that Savoy was annexed to France, and Holstein to Germany; but we lack the details as to which nationality constitutes the majority in Seistân Under such circumstances, it would appear that the most that the award could have granted to Persia should have been such tracts of land as were occupied by Persians, and it even then established a bad precedent, that occupation, or emigration into another country constitutes a right to the country itself; although it is not an uncommon thing in the East—as in Kasghar. Then, again, if the present Afghan dynasty is not Durani, the existing ruler succeeded to the so-called empire of Afghanistan, in as far as he could establish his claims. If the Tartar dynasty in China was succeeded by a Chinese dynasty, China would remain the same; just as nearer home we have seen dynasties, and even forms of government, constantly changing without effecting the integrity of the Realm, save by force—the ultimate arbitrament of nations, as well as of princes.

Which party is responsible for the existing outbreak in Seistan is unknown; but the circumstances in which it has had its rise are pretty fairly before us. The only fact that is certain is, that with an English force at Kandahar, this province may, if the disturbances grow serious, become an important factor in the existing complication.

Another, and a still more important consideration at the present moment is, that if India, Afghanistan, Persia, and Asia Minor are

united in the face of Russian aggression, as they must be, unless they are prepared to see all southern and western Asia fall gradually into the hands of the great Colossus of the north, whose ambition seems to know no limits, these little difficulties will soon disappear in the face of a common danger, and a home-and-hearth interest in the welfare and independence of all.

THE STORY OF AN ALCHEMIST.

THE lives of some of the most renowned alchemists present many features of interest. Some put down those who spend their lives in search for gold or the philosopher's stone as fools or impostors, and take no further concern. But it is not so. Many of them, if misled, were still believers; others were dupes, as well as deceivers; and few but led a strange, mystic, and eventful life. Many found nothing in the pursuit of their art but deception, ruin, and despair; others attained wealth, and have left behind them names consecrated by an enlarged charity and piety; and among the most renowned of these was the celebrated Nicolas Flamel—a name almost venerated for nigh four centuries, and even yet popular in Paris.

It is not precisely known where Flamel was born. It is generally said at Pontoise, somewhere about 1300. Little or nothing is known of him till he joined the corporation of public writers, who at that time had their *échoppes* (whence our "shops,") resting on the old walls of the Charnier des Innocents, but they were, at that very time, removed to the portico of the church of Saint Jacques la Boucherie. The Hermit of the Chaussée d'Antin has left us a vivid description of one those *échoppes* as they were in his time. Flamel had two, one for himself and one for copyists and apprentices; but they were only two feet and a half in length by two feet wide. Yet in such limited space did the public writer spend his life, for he abided by it, even when he had become rich, if he did not even accummulate his wealth within such narrow precincts. Therein lies the pith of the first part of our story.

A first important step in life was to be wedded. Nicholas seems to have had an eye to interest, even in this undertaking. He married the widow of two husbands, without encumbrances, therefore, he could not well have expected any such to arise to him; but, on the other hand, he obtained whereby to build a house, which, at the angle of the old Rue de Marivaux, nearly faced his writing-desk—for it was really little more. As was the fashion at this epoch, the newly-built house had a sign—in this instance of the Fleur de lys; and courtiers came there to receive lessons in caligraphy and paid accordingly.

Nicholas Flamel had indeed always an eye to business. As a housel older, he began to purchase books, and to sell them again to his pupils. He must, indeed, have had a turn for books for with them came a great change in his fortunes. One night, according to the legend, he had a dream. An angel appeared to him holding a book. "Flamel," said the angel, "look at this book; you do not understand it, neither you nor any others; but you will one day see that in it which no other will be permitted to see."

The revelation passed by unnoticed for a time, until one day, in the year 1357, Flamel purchased, of an unknown, an old book, which he at once recognised to be that which he had seen in his dream. A particular account of this book is given in a work attributed to Nicholas himself. "*Le Livre des Figures Hieroglyphiques de Nicholas Flamel, traduit du Latin en Français,*" *par P. Arnauld, Sieur de la Chevalrie.* Be that as it may, it was said to have been penned by one, Abraham, "Prince, priest, levite, astrologer, and philosopher," for the benefit of the Jews dispersed, by the ire of God, among the Gauls: and maranatha was pronounced against any one who should peruse it, if he was not a sacrificer or a scribe.

If Nicolas was not a sacrificer, he was most assuredly a scribe; so he felt he had a perfect right to peruse the work, only unfortunately the task exceeded his ability. He, however, made out enough to discover that the author pointed out to his co-patriots the means of paying tribute to the Roman emperors by the transmutation of metals; but it was utterly impossible to discover, without being versed in the cabal of the Jews, the composition of the "primary agent in transmutation,"—a secret which never has, and probably, for good reasons, never will be disclosed.

The possession of this book, however, determined the future career of Nicolas. He passed his days and nights in studying it; he kept it secret from every one save his wife Pernelle; and she, like a sensible woman, instead of scolding him for his fanaticism, consoled him under the affliction. Pernelle was not like the wife of Pallisier the potter; but then, again, there were no children clamouring for bread. It is not surprising that, at an epoch when learned doctors and pious bishops were alike engaged in the search for the philosopher's stone, that Nicolas should have had recourse to prayer to obtain an understanding of the cabalistic figures of the book of Abraham. His prayer, which has been preserved, concluded with, "I ask you, in the name of Jesus Christ, the celestial, angular, miraculous stone, founded from all eternity which commands and reigns with you."

Nicolas's prayer was not granted, but he persevered notwith-

standing. The book itself was carefully concealed from profane eyes, but he made copies of some of the hieroglyphs and figures, and exhibited them to his clients. One Maître Anseaulme, a licentiate in medicine and amateur of alchemy, was alone able to give such explanations as led the scribe into chemical, or rather alchemical labours, which lasted for over twenty years without bearing fruit. Wearied at length by his profitless task, he made a vow to carry out a pilgrimage to Saint Jacques, of Galicia, in Spain, as also to inquire of the Jewish synagogues of the same country. The search proved vain; and it was not till he was on his way home that he fell in, at Léon, with a converted Jew, Maître Canches, as he was called, who was well versed in cabalistic figures, and who was only too glad to give the desired explanation of the figures in Abraham's book.

The two seem to have been equally delighted. The one at seeing a work penned by one of the princes of the Cabal, and which had long been lost to the adepts; the other at meeting a man who could decypher the enigma contained in these unintelligible hieroglyphs. The Jew agreed to accompany Nicolas to Paris, so that they might work there together; but, unfortunately, he was taken ill at Orleans, and died there, the pious Nicolas supplying the funds necessary for masses for his soul in purgatory.

Nicolas Flamel, however, being now initiated in the secret of the book, had only three years more of labour before, according to his own account, he was enabled to compose the sublime stone of the sages. This, with the aid of his good wife, Pernelle, whom he appears to have thoroughly won over to his delusions, and in whose presence a final success was, according to his own statement, ultimately arrived at. Whatever credit may or may not be given to the claim to discovery, which, as usual, is clothed in cabalistic language, in which mention is made of "solar virgin's milk," "red, citrin, mercury," "philosophic eggs and fowls," and other jargon of the science; Nicolas does not give "the first agent." Certain it is, however, that his means underwent a great change for the better, at the period which he claims for his discovery. Flamel became at that time proprietor, in Paris alone, of over thirty houses.

This increase of wealth became at the same time the commencement of these pious foundations which have shed a lustre on the name of the Alchemist. The little house in the Rue Marivaux was converted into an asylum for widows and orphans. Nicholas and Pernelle had no children, so their abundant means were devoted to the building of hospitals, and the repairing of churches and cemeteries. They founded the hospital known as that of the Quinze-Vingts, raised a portico to Saint Geneviève des Ardents, and endowed many churches, more especially that of Saint Jacques la Boucherie.

What may be termed the archæological part of the story of Flamel is by no means the least interesting. He raised constructions in the Charnier des Innocents, in which the emblems of the art, to which tradition attributed his fortune, were symbolically reproduced. He had his image sculptured over the portico of edifices raised by his liberality. One of these statues of the old alchemist was to be seen in the last century over the portal of Sainte Geneviève, another stood over the entrance of Saint Jacques, and a third on a column attached to his dwelling. There were other statues in the Charnier des Innocents, in the old church of the hospital Saint Gervais, and two in front of a mansion which he built in the Rue de Montmorency.

Flamel was always represented in these statues on his knees with his hands clasped in prayer. He was always in the dress of a public scribe, with his ink-horn in his waistband. Nor was his dear Pernelle forgotten. Her statue was, up to the time of the Revolution, to be seen in several places by the side of that of her beloved husband. In one she kneeled to St. Peter, whilst Nicholas kneeled to St. Paul, and between the two was the virgin and infant. The two were likewise to be seen in several allegorical sculptures, notably in one representing the last judgment.

The real origin of the wealth of Flamel has, as might have been supposed, been the subject of much discussion. Wherever a legend exists, it has been justly remarked there exists also a history, if it can only be found out. The Abbé Villain, in his *Histoire Critique de Nicolas Flamel*, Paris, 1761, has endeavoured to reduce to their minimum the expenses incurred by Flamel and his wife in their various pious foundations and charitable endowments, which embraced Boulogne, as well as Paris.

But these detractors are at once disposed of by the simple exposition of the facts of the case. Dr. Hoefer, in his *Histoire de Chimie*, argues that Flamel was an usurer, and allied with certain Jews in practises which were more financial than cabalistic. But the asseveration, however plausible, is without proof, and is opposed to what is known of the man's character. CharlesVI., having heard of the wealth and liberality of the scribe,sent a Monsieur Craimoisi to report upon him. The latter found the philosopher seated in his modest *échoppe*, taking his daily repast in a common earthenware vessel. It has also been suggested that Flamel profited by the persecution and proscription of the Jews; but Charles VI., who banished the Jews from the kingdom, would not have allowed such acts of spoliation to pass by unpunished. M. Louis Figuier, in his work, *L'Alchimie et les Alchimistes*, argues that if we look to the character and to the extreme simplicity of the manners and habits of Nicholas Flamel and of his good wife Pernelle, the reputed dis-

covery of the philosopher's stone is quite unnecessary to account for his wealth. Before the invention of printing, the position of a public scribe was very different to what it became afterwards. Nicolas was also a copyist and dealer in rare manuscripts; his wife was careful and prudent; he himself was austerely abstemious, he had many rich clients, no children or other domestic charges, and all the ordinary elements of prosperity were within his reach.

Nicolas Flamer had also a kind of literary history. He began his *Explication des Figures Hieroglyphiques* in 1399, and did not complete it till 1413, the year of Pernelle's death. He penned in 1409, what he called his *Sommaire Philosophique* in verse. It was reproduced in the third volume of the *Roman de la Rose*. He was also the author of the *Désir Désiré* and of the *Traité des Lavures*. The "Explication" has been attributed by some to P. Arnauld, who claimed to have translated it from the Latin; but as the very symbols sculptured by Flamel on the fourth arch of the Charnier des Innocents are met in the work, it is more generally admitted to have been derived from a manuscript of Nicolas Flamel's.

Finally, and as is usual with most people, came the mortuary part of the story; and this, like all other points of the mysterious man's career, had some peculiarities attending upon it. Nicolas Flamel was buried in the church which he had done so much for—Saint Jacques la Boucherie. He had paid the expenses of his funeral whilst he was alive, and had also selected the place of burial in front of the crucifix and of the Holy Virgin where, twelve times a year, after masses provided for, the priests were to go in procession, and in surplices, to scatter holy water. He had also designed a commemorative sculpture and inscription, the former representing the Saviour as holding a terrestial globe between St. Peter and St. Paul. Beneath was the inscription recording the pious works of the deceased. Then a scroll with the words *Domine Deus, in tuâ misericordiâ speravi*, and lastly, below all, the image of a body almost wasted away with the legend:

"I e terre suis venu et en terre retourne.
L'âme rends à toi, J.H.V., qui les péchiès pardonne."

Such was the orthography of *péchès* at the time.

We said, finally. But this is scarcely correct, for in reality the story of Nicolas Flamel did not end with his death. Flamel died in 1418, but many writers averred that at that date he only left Paris in order to join Pernelle, who had disappeared on her side, five years previously, to go to Asia. In fact, the adepts in the Hermetic Art endowed the supposed discoverer of the philosopher's stone with the gift of immortality. This tradition found its way to the East, where it still existed in the seventeenth century. The

well-known Paul Lucas relates, in his Travels in Asia Minor, having met at Burnus Bashi a dervish of the Usbecs, who declared that the true philosophy revealed the secret of living for a thousand years. He laughed at the idea of the supposed decease of Flamel and his wife; and declared that they were dear friends of his, with whom he had held intercourse in India only three years previously.

In the year 1818, an impostor gave out in Paris that he was the real Nicolas Flamel, and he advertised for pupils to be initiated in the science, at a considerable sacrifice of the existing coin of the realm. But the day had gone by for alchemy—another philosophy, that of limited liability companies, had taken its place, and the pretender was obliged to beat a hasty retreat. Others held that treasures were buried in the house of the old couple; and they went so far as to carry out excavations, but, needless to say, without success.

COINCIDENCE OF IDEAS.

THE coincidence of ideas among those engaged in literary pursuits is, in the present day of multiplied labourers, at times puzzling—if not almost discouraging. It happens constantly that if a writer has an idea, unless he can find an outlet for it in a daily paper, or at the least an hebdomadal publication, he will find himself anticipated before the end of the month. Hence also many ideas clash without any intention on the part of their authors, who are often wrongfully accused of plagiarism, and, in more serious cases, the coincidence becomes even a matter of litigation. These facts—the result of long experience—have recently been brought to our minds, by the fact that Mr. Henry Bromilow has for seven months past been contributing a series of "Tales from the Old Dramatists" to the pages of the NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE, and we have just seen a work noticed under precisely the same title, as penned by a Mr. M. E. Browne, and published by Remington and Co. Not only has the same title been adopted, but we observe in the series "Jane Shore," "The Gamester," "Douglas," and other old plays, the stories of which have also been related by our contributor.

THE BRONZE GATES OF SHAMANESER III.

WE recently called attention to Mr. Rassam's discovery of two large bronzes (supposed at first to be trophies), at Balawat, near Nineveh. Mr. Pincher, who has succeeded to the late Mr. George Smith as Dr. Birch's assistant at the British Museum, has since made known that, on the arrival of the bronzes at the British

Museum, the plates of the largest of the two were put together, cleaned, and nailed with the original bronze nails upon wood of the same thickness as when it was first set up, about twenty-eight centuries ago.

Then for the first time it began to be dimly seen that the bronze plates had formed the coverings of a pair of rectangular folding doors, each about 22 ft. in height and 6 ft. in breadth, which had turned on pivots, and were supported at the top by strong rings fixed in the masonry. The honour of the discovery of this interesting fact belongs to Mr. Ready, the ingenious artificer attached to this department of the British Museum. These gates, which are now attributed to Shalmaneser III., who reigned over Assyria from B C. 859 to B.C. 825; and not to Assur-Nazir-pal, who reigned from B.C. 885 to B.C 860, are more richly illustrated than all the monuments in the Nimroud gallery of the British Museum put together, and it is expected that a glimpse will be obtained of Jewish faces of the ninth century before Christ.

CURIOSITIES OF NEXT OF KIN.

To the Editor of COLBURN'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

SIR,—In your recent review of my little work on "Unclaimed Money," you were good enough to say that I could not do better than some day give the public another popular volume on the claims that come before me—"their peculiarities and whimsicalities." Permit me to thank you for your valuable suggestion, which shall not be forgotten when some convenient opportunity offers. Meanwhile it occurs to me that a few jottings on Next of Kin Advertisements generally may be acceptable to your readers. Such notices are often of the greatest possible value to persons whose eyes they fail to catch at the time of publication, and they are also occasionally of a very romantic kind, as will be seen by the following, culled from Advertisements which have appeared in the leading newspapers during the past year.

A clue was desired to the relatives and property of an eminent photographer who died at Rome, and who is believed to have possessed real estates in Cumberland. A person last heard of at "Jim Crow Diggings," was inquired for with reference to a Scotch Succession Case; and intimation was given to persons supposed to be resident in America offering payment of a mortgage dated as long back as 1813.

Henry Stuart Duncombe is regarded by the Court of Chancery as dead—he not having been heard of for upwards of seven years—and his creditors were advertised for. I may mention *en passant* that there is quite a romance connected with this Henry S. Duncombe. He was the son of a wealthy solicitor, but followed the occupation of a journeyman tailor. Being in distress, he went to his father for assistance, who dismissed him with *half-a-crown*. Shortly afterwards the father died suddenly without a will, and consequently the son became entitled to a large share of his father's estate. It appears from the Chancery proceedings that such share amounted to about £25,000. Truth is stranger than fiction!

Among Missing Relative Advertisements it would be difficult to find a more touching one than the following:—

HANNAH A.—Will you send your mother any part of your dress you left home in, so that I may know you are alive?

A mariner named Eastham, who went to Australia thirty years ago, is entitled to property by the death of his mother; and three

sons who went to Van Dieman's Land are also entitled to property. H.D.M., of Ledbury, Herefordshire, is requested to send his address to——, with "full particulars of his present position, occupation, if married, any family," &c. Let us hope these inquisitive queries were addressed by a rich old uncle to an expectant nephew.

Sir John Bennett thankfully acknowledged his unknown friend's generosity and "honour" in the restoration of his "lost property." Sir John's gratitude was enhanced by his entire inability to determine to whom to attribute this act of kindness. Information was sought as to the son-in-law of J. H. Bockhorn, born in Hanover in 1754; and the heir of a sweep, who died in 1854, was also sought. In Mrs. Helen Blake's case, where £140,000 went to the Crown, litigation has resulted, and further claimants are inquired for. The nephews and nieces (believed to be resident in India, Tasmania, and the United States) of a gentleman who died in Ireland are inquired for with reference to an Irish Probate case; and the representatives of persons who were shareholders in the West New Jersey Society, in 1692, were invited to send in their claims.

The relatives of a lady, who had died suddenly in Paris, were desired to communicate with an Inspector of the Detective Department; and "Tootoo Bychan and Tinkey" were making anxious inquiries for "their lost uncle." Information was sought respecting the property of E, Green, who died in Jamaica in the early part of the present century; and an owner was sought for 60,000 rupees left by Michael J. H. Unclaimed Money was due to the Next of Kin of two persons, born in London in 1762 and 1766 respectively; and Matthew Hand, who went to the United States in 1845, and has not since been heard of, is "wanted." The following is unique, and I give it *in extenso*:—

MYNTLYND.—BEENO.—HEISTEN.—At last, I thank God, I have it in my power to inform you that I shall be in a position to pay you 6,500 dollars within the next twelve months, and the remainder of the amount I owe you early in the year 1879.

A son, resident in Australia, is wanted to administer to his father's estate; and J. H., who sailed from Sydney in 1875, is earnestly requested to write home. Dan M. Mulligan wants to know Pat Duffy's address; and Harry Williams's niece, Sally, wishes to see Emma about property. Mrs. Riley, daughter of the late Mr. Henchy, Q.C., is requested to call on her solicitor, and she will receive good news; and James Tappin, late master lighterman at Brantford, notifies that he is still living; that he is in his eighty-fourth year, and would be glad to see or hear from any of his old friends.

The following is laconic, but the news conveyed is eminently satisfactory:—

SENOR.—The DESCENDANT has squared all. Return at once. All is safe.

Here is another strange announcement:—

MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED.—W. PRESSICK.—Emigrated to Texas about 40 years ago; supposed to have left wife and children. Was Member for one Session of the Texas Legislature. He suddenly disappeared, and has never been heard of since. His Heirs are entitled to his property.

The heirs of John Jackson, born in London or Gloucestershire in 1808, were informed that he died in 1876; that he had in a trunk the likeness of a brother, and brother's wife and two children; that he left 6,000 dollars in money and 6,000 dollars in property; and that further information could be had of ——. A niece will hear of something to her advantage on communicating with her uncle; and the relatives of a lady, who was born at Eastbourne, in 1806, are sought by the French Consul. A husband who, shortly after marriage, separated from his wife, was informed that she had died leaving property; and the Next of Kin of George M., were wanted, with reference to £2,000 Reduced. The mate of a vessel, who had not been heard of since 1861, has been remembered by his aunt; and a Joseph O., who emigrated to Australia twenty years ago, is entitled to property under his father's will.

The descendants of Mary and Joyce Shepherd, daughters of Henry Shepherd, a vintner, of London, in 1713, are interested in £20,000; and J. S. Tate may hear of some money left him by applying at ——. A handsome reward (£200) was offered for the address or proof of death of a captain in the Hussars: if the notice should meet his eye, he was most urgently requested to communicate with his solicitors. Claimants were wanted for an estate in Jamaica, and the Next of Kin sought of a private in the Royal Marines. A nephew, who went to visit his uncle in 1871, and has not since been heard of, is entitled to a legacy; while Edward H——, who is supposed to have gone to America, is interested in leasehold property. Twenty-four cousins (one believed to be resident at the Cape) are also interested in the residuary estate of a relative.

The following is suggestive of a family feud:—

JAMES YOUNG never had a Will—it was PETERS. Cardinal S., Upper Plain House, and Admiral S., Lower Plain House, changed it from Peters to Young. When they changed everything, in 1844, they had no m e right over me.

The heirs of a lady named Bonthron, or Jolly, are entitled to considerable heritable and moveable property; and a son will

find it to his advantage to communicate with his mother, who is now a widow. The heirs of two persons who emigrated to Texas are wanted to claim money in the hands of the United States Government; and two brothers—a police-sergeant and a soldier—are wanted to claim the estate of another brother, who died twenty-five years ago. A plumber and glazier is interested in £1,500: if dead, his Next of Kin are entitled; and a tailor who left Abergavenny in 1840, is entitled to a share of £2,000.

"Dear Percy" is informed that "some one loves him too dearly to let him go as a common sailor, but will try and get him placed on a good ship." He is entreated "not to go away without wishing his distressed parents good-bye.' Numerous notices were issued by the Bank of England authorities as to re-transfers of Stock or Dividends from the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt—claimants having appeared. The Heir at Law of the Chevalier Francois de Rosaz was inquired for, owing to a dispute as to the Chevalier's very whimsical will. This gentleman spent the best part of his life in hunting up missing Heirs at Law, and died worth £40,000 personalty.

The following is from the *Scotsman*:—

[PERSONAL.—JANET NEWTON, daughter of John Newton, private in 79th Highlanders, last seen at Montreal about 40 years ago, when three years old, will hear of something to her advantage on applying to ——.

Should Janet be traced through this advertisement, the news of a legacy would certainly be unexpected in her case.

Hugh Edward John H——, only known to many persons as "the Whistler," and in the habit of frequenting public-houses, is, among the fortunate ones, wanted for "something to their advantage;" and a nephew—last heard of in Queensland—is interested in his aunt's estate.

Daniel Matthew Matthias Charles Henry George Place, a private soldier, is wanted for something to his advantage; and the relatives of the mate of an American vessel, wrecked last year, are anxious to hear from him. Large rewards were offered for copies of missing birth, marriage, and burial certificates, including one for the marriage certificate of a lady, who is reported to have eloped with a baker in 1792. Liberal rewards were also offered for copies of old Next of Kin advertisements.

Another lady was informed that she could obtain possession of "a verbal bequest of sundry china ware, &c., made to her by a gentleman who died at Greenwich in 1844."

In addition to the foregoing multifarious notices, the Treasury Solicitor advertised for the Next of Kin of between twenty and thirty persons who had died intestate without known rela-

tives. Estates thus reverting to the Crown were estimated by the late Queen's Proctor to bring into the National Exchequer about £40,000 a year. The Crown is also the recipient of very large sums of money arising from Unclaimed Dividends of the Bank of England, Army and Navy Prize Money, Unclaimed Soldiers' Balances, Estates of Colonial Intestates, and "Conscience Money,"—the last item is said to bring in about £15,000 a year.

I trust that a perusal of these jottings may convey the news of a goodly windfall to some of your readers—they will then have served a very useful purpose. The "agony" column of the *Times* is often interesting as well as profitable reading—the news of an unexpected legacy has not unfrequently been thus conveyed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

EDWARD PRESTON,
(Proprietor of "Chambers's Index of Next of Kin," &c.)

1, Great College Street, Westmister,
December, 1878.

DE NOVO.

O WASTED life! O vanished hours!
Unheeded, voiceless on ye sped,
Or leaving but a few stray flowers,
To save your memory from the dead.

Their petals may have long been sere;
We've seen decay their blossoms fill;
And naught that once was bright is here,
To satisfy our worship still.

Then let us cast their forms away,
A burden to the wanton wind,
And ere we've lived another day,
A more enduring trophy find.

H. E. W.